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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
ANGLICAN MISSIONARIES AND POLITICS IN YORUBALAND:
1845-1861

by
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A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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The undersigned certify that they have read,
and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
for acceptance, a thesis entitled ANGLICAN
MISSIONARIES AND POLITICS IN YORUBALAND, 1845-1861
submitted by Leopold Henry Rosenberg in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

In the following pages the writer sets out to investigate two separate but dependent themes. The political involvement of the Church Missionary Society as a London-based pressure group, influencing the British government to adopt certain policies, and the complementary political activities of its missionaries on the spot form the first theme. The second theme is the work of the Society in planting Christianity and civilization in Western Nigeria. The focus is on the work done among the Egba people of Yorubaland. The connection between the two subjects is that the CMS policy of building the Egba as a center of British and missionary influence, and as the symbol of regeneration in Africa achieved with "Bible and Plough", depended for its success on the attainment of certain political ends. These were the establishment of British influence on the coast, from whence missionaries and traders would penetrate the interior, and the promotion of the commercial and political interests of the Egba with whom the CMS became intimately connected.

Several sub-themes highlight these activities. The convergence of missionary and consular interests demonstrated by the intervention in the dynastic disputes of Lagos and Badagry in the late 1840's and early 1850's, the role played by the Society in the British decision to establish its paramountcy at Lagos in 1851, the subsequent divergence of missionary and consular policies, and the decline of the Society's influence in the mid 1850's are first analyzed. This is later followed by an analysis of the factors that led to the annexation of Lagos in 1861 and the abandonment of the pro-Egba policy pursued thus far by the British authorities in Lagos. In the sequel, a collision of commercial and political

interests led to a military clash between the Egba and Lagos in 1865. Finally, the circumstances that led to the expulsion of the missionaries from Abeokuta in 1867 are briefly examined.

The Society's policy pertaining to education, economic development, and an African Church is discussed in detail. Its accomplishments and failures are explained by way of the long and protracted controversy between Henry Venn (secretary of the CMS from 1841 to 1872, Venn was its great theoretician and director) and Henry Townsend (leader of the Yoruba Mission, Townsend directed the opposition to Venn's policy) on such questions as the involvement of European missionaries and native agents in commerce, the type of education suitable for Africans, and the role of native teachers in the Church. The outcome of the competition between European missionaries and their own mission-educated elite in the late 1850's is also investigated.

In appraisal, the evidence suggests that the policy of evangelization, in proportion to energy expended and numbers of bona-fide converts, was largely a failure at least by 1861. Relatively few were converted to Christianity -- almost none in places of authority. A few lived in Christian villages around the Mission House separated from the rest of the community, and there the cultural impact was significant. However, the fabric of the old society had not given way, nor did it begin to do so until very late in the 19th century. Venn's policy for African leadership in the Church did not proceed very far largely because of missionary opposition. On the other hand, the Mission succeeded in establishing the foundation of the educational system of Nigeria. The Mission also succeeded in encouraging the Egba to exploit their agricultural and commercial resources but failed in the endeavour to undermine the age-old "trust" system. Missionary education

aimed at fostering the growth of a 'middle class' of artisans and entrepreneurs who were to cooperate with missionaries in reforming Egba society. The educated emigrants from Sierra Leone, however, were inclined to competition rather than cooperation. They competed with their white superiors for leadership in the Church and for the ears of the traditional authorities, and, when they finally succeeded in capturing control of the Egba government, they turned around and expelled them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to those who by their assistance have made this thesis possible. First, Professor M. Bax, the Chairman of my examination committee, for her direction and patient criticism. My thanks also goes to Dr. L. H. Thomas, Chairman of the History Department for his general commenting and patient handling of the many administrative problems that arose in conjunction with my thesis. In addition, I wish to extend my gratitude to Dr. M. Reckord and Dr. B. Heeney who similarly provided me with numerous suggestions and were kind enough to read my final draft. To Dr. S. Saberwal, now of McGill University, I feel indebted for his suggestions from the point of view of anthropology. Finally, I wish to thank my former supervisor Dr. D. L. Wiedner, now of Temple University, Philadelphia.

Many thanks must go to the History Department of the University of Alberta for the financial assistance that enabled me to undertake and complete this research.

ABBREVIATIONS

Church Missionary Society	CMS/ the Society
Sierra Leone immigrants in Yoruba	'Saro'
Society for the Propagation of the Gospel	S.P.G.
Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge	S.P.C.K.
African Civilization Society	A.C.S.
Wesleyan Missionary Society	WMS
Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria	JHSN
Journal of African History	JAH
Cambridge History of the British Empire	CHBE
Cambridge Historical Journal	CHJ
Parliamentary Papers	P.P.

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PART I THE SETTING

1. THE BRITISH BACKGROUND

BRITAIN ON THE EVE OF ITS MISSIONARY EXPANSION IN AFRICA

On the eve of the 19th century Britain, after three centuries of peripheral trading connections in Africa, was ready to launch a new phase of exploration, missionary activity, and commercial penetration. The ground was well prepared by favourable circumstances. By the end of the 18th century, the Industrial Revolution had released the material and social forces that sought greater financial and commercial opportunities in Africa and elsewhere. As a Great Power Britain was at her peak: she had retained her ascendancy over France in North America and in India; the Napoleonic Wars confirmed her world naval supremacy and gave her further conquests in Ceylon (1795) and Goree (1800).¹ The African Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa (1788), expressing the scientific and intellectual interests of the age, was already ushering the great age of African exploration. By this time too, Protestant Christianity was on the verge of its greatest era of missionary expansion. The establishment of missions in Africa, India, and elsewhere, however, was awaiting the re-awakening of a conscience that had laid dormant for most of the 18th century. What is meant here will become clearer by a brief examination of British society.

¹P. D. Curtin, The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Actions, 1780-1850 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), pp. 140-41.

In contrast to military might and economic vigour, the moral tone of English society was at its lowest ebb. Inebriation, immorality, illiteracy, crime, and extreme poverty prevailed among many of the poorer classes, particularly in London.² These evils were accentuated by the grim features of early industrial society: sweated labour in mine and mill, unsanitary and overcrowded living conditions -- a general dehumanization of the people most in need of the benefits of the new technology. The government did little to provide schools, public relief for the poor and the infirm, public safety, and other welfare measures usually taken for granted in our generation.³

The England of George III was perhaps typical for its absence of sympathy to the suffering of the poor and social outcast.⁴ The prevailing attitude accepted poverty as a natural phenomenon: a society divided into rich and poor had always existed and will continue to exist. Any attempt to interfere with existing laws and institutions was widely regarded (particularly in governing circles) as not only revolutionary, but perhaps even evil; and if proof was needed, the excesses of the Jacobins in France provided a ready made example of what tampering with age-old institutions and traditions can lead to.

The basic insensibility and cruelty of the age was perhaps best reflected in the treatment of Africans. Involving

²For a description of London poor, see H. Traine, trans. by F. Roe, Notes on England, 1872, pp. 34-34. P. Quennel, ed., Mayhew's England, 1952 p. 85, cited in K. Heasman, Evangelicals in Action (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962), pp. 3-5.

³E. M. Howse, Saints in Politics (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), p. 5.

⁴Ibid., p. 127.

millions of pounds and powerful vested interests, felt to be inseparably associated with the commerce, welfare, and even defence of Britain, the slave trade had attained an average of between 70,000 and 80,000 slaves a year during its height in the 18th century.⁵ The majority of people were completely untouched by the inhumanity of this iniquitous trade that daily robbed Africa of its most vigorous people. To most Europeans this was part of the economic order of things. Abstract moral and humanitarian principles did not really enter into it. The slave trader ignorant of household slavery in its African context, and perhaps influenced by the pseudo-scientific theories of the day, allegedly proving the inferiority of Africans, could always appease his conscience by pointing out that after all a slave was better off in a West India plantation.

THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL

There was the need for a national revival. The central impulse came from a small core of⁶ Evangelical members of the Church of England, centred at Cambridge and at Clapham, near London. These resourceful, rich, brilliantly organized lay and clerical gentlemen undertook, with the active co-operation of evangelical Dissenters, Quakers, and other humanitarians, the establishment of a vast range of charities, voluntary societies, and other social welfare measures to reform the moral and manners

⁵K. O. Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 3.

⁶By "Evangelical", I take it to mean one of two things: those early 18th century Anglicans who had evangelical conversions but remained in the Church of England; those who came to form the Church Evangelical party later towards the end of the century. By "evangelical" (small "e"), I mean those within the Nonconformist denominations who trace their spiritual genealogy to the "Methodism" of John Wesley and George Whitefield. On occasion when referring to interdenominational co-operation, "evangelical" or "evangelicalism" is used in a broad sense to include Anglican Evangelicals too.

of Englishmen.⁷

From our standpoint, we are of course more interested in examples of Christian action in the international field. Evangelicalism shared with humanitarianism the doctrine of responsibility toward the underprivileged. Where the humanitarian stressed the natural rights of men, the evangelical emphasized the God given equality of all to receive the blessings of the Gospel. Africans might be "pagans" and "uncivilized" but they still had souls to be saved like other men. This made them the proper objects for Christian missions and philanthropy. From this evangelical-humanitarian source, emerged the great anti-slavery movement, the scheme to re-settle Negroes in Sierra Leone, and above all the fervour and zeal that resulted in the foundation of Protestant missions in Africa, India, and in other parts of the world.

THE CLAPHAM SECT

We need to take a closer look at the Church Evangelical party for two reasons: first, it was the founder of the Church Missionary Society; secondly, the Society was bequeathed with a whole apparatus of efficient organizations and methods which it was later able to use in the pursuit of its objectives.

In the last years of the 18th century and during the opening years of the 19th, the Evangelicals organized themselves into a "party" with its own peculiar methods of propaganda and agitation. At Cambridge, the centre of the movement, the party

⁷ Those interested in this aspect of evangelical activity will find any of the following useful: Heasman, pp. 6-9; Howse, pp. 95-100, 119-124; Asa Briggs, The Age of Improvement: 1783-1867 (2nd ed.; London: Longmans Green & Co., 1960), p. 71.

was represented by two great leaders, Isaac Milner and Charles Simeon. Milner, president of Queen's College and Dean of Carlisle, an awe-inspiring man was the brain behind the group. Simeon, Fellow at Kings, Cambridge, from 1782 to 1832 and curate-in-charge of Trinity Church, spread his followers throughout the country to propagate the new spirit of pietism. Simeon himself leading an exemplary life -- meditating, reading devotional literature, and visiting regularly his 'circuit' of parishes -- was probably one of the greatest spiritual influences of the time.⁸

These clergymen were linked to the world of business and politics by a group of Evangelical laymen, most of whom lived in or near Clapham, then a village near London. Drawn from the upper and upper-middle classes, they were chiefly members of Parliament. Their leader was William Wilberforce, a distinguished M. P. for Hull and one of the greatest orators of the age, a man of great influence in governing circles and a personal friend of the Prime Minister, William Pitt the younger. Wilberforce is remembered for his persistent efforts for over two decades to abolish the legal slave trade. Financial support came from Henry Thornton, a wealthy banker and philanthropist. There was Zachary Macaulay, formerly the overseer of a Jamaican estate, who was specifically interested in Sierra Leone schemes and later became Governor of the Colony of Sierra Leone. John Shore (later Lord Teignmouth), Governor-General of India (1793-8), was the leading spirit behind the interdenominational British and Foreign Bible

⁸ E. Halévy, England in 1815, trans. by E. I. Watkin & D. A. Barker (2nd rev. ed.; New York: Ernest Benn, 1961), pp. 434-35. V. H. H. Green, The Hanoverians: 1714-1815 (London: Edward Arnold, 1959), pp. 288-89.

Society (1804). James Stephen father of Sir James Stephen - the famous humanitarian and member of the CMS who dominated the Colonial Office as Permanent Under-Secretary for the Colonies (1836-1867) -- was the lawyer for the group. There was also Charles Grant, later Lord Glenelg, Chairman of the East India Company who became the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the years 1835 to 1839, when humanitarian influences within the Colonial Office were at their peak. The Clapham Sect had John Venn, son of Henry Venn (the early Evangelical) and father of Henry Venn the influential secretary of the CMS whom we shall meet many times later, as their parish clergyman.⁹

Clapham's influence, completely out of proportion to its small number, was largely due to connection with those men of the ruling class who really counted. They knew the inner corridors of power; some of the more prominent members were personal friends of Cabinet members, higher civil servants, and other influential people. Men of emotion and action, relying on a few outstanding personalities, they could count for wide support by appealing to the humanitarian sympathies of their colleagues in the House of Commons. Besides as a group, they successfully exploited the techniques of deputations, petitions, and public meetings to gather support for their causes. Regarded with suspicion and even outright hostility by the Episcopal Bench, nevertheless, their mild Calvinism enabled them to work with all sorts of people -- rich Quakers, Nonconformist businessmen, even liberals and freethinkers.¹⁰ If these things can be kept in mind, then the whole subject of CMS influence on British policy in

⁹Halevy, pp. 434-36, G. R. Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England* (new ed.; London: Church Book Room Press, 1951), p. 116.

¹⁰Halevy, pp. 437-39.

Nigeria becomes more meaningful.

THE SIERRA LEONE EXPERIMENT

Our starting point may very well be the efforts of the humanitarian, Granville Sharp, on behalf of Negro slaves in Britain, culminating in Lord Mansfield's historic judgment of 1772 making slavery in Britain illegal.¹¹ Overnight some 14,000 slaves became legally free. Unfortunately, many were reduced to poverty and destitution as they swarmed to London and other cities for work. Assistance came by way of the Committee for the Relief of the Black Poor organized in 1786 and including several Evangelicals. The Committee was not able, however, to handle the large numbers applying for aid. That very year it adopted a scheme (first suggested by the humanitarian amateur botanist, Dr. Henry Smeathman) for settling these "black poors" in Sierra Leone. In 1787 with the financial support of the British government, Sharp dispatched 400 negroes to found a new colony -- the "Province of Freedom" -- on the Sierra Leone Peninsula.¹² Unfortunately, however, like previous "utopian" projects, African realities were not taken into consideration and the venture failed.¹³ The settlement's fate was sealed when at the end of its second year a neighbouring chief burnt the place to the ground. Sharp and his friends remained undaunted.¹⁴

¹¹Curtin, p. 53.

¹²Curtin, pp. 98-99; Howse, pp. 45-46.

¹³I am alluding to the scheme of buying Gambia as a dumping ground for convicts, and the dozen or so British projects from 1783-1793. See Curtin's Chapter IV headed "New Jerusalems".

¹⁴Howse, p. 46.

In 1791 the newly founded Sierra Leone Company, heavily represented with Clapham elements and with Sharp as President, attempted to rescue the unhappy settlement. An expedition gathered the 64 survivors and soon reinforcement came with 1131 Africans repatriated from Nova Scotia. In that very year Freetown, the capital, was founded. Only the resources of Clapham saved the Colony from catastrophe after catastrophe -- fire, insurrection and disease, culminating in a Jacobin attack in 1794 -- and established it on a permanent footing. Zachary Macaulay had already become governor, and in 1808 Sierra Leone was transferred to Britain to become the first Crown Colony in Africa.¹⁵

The foothold gained in Sierra Leone was of course as much a victory for the humanitarian movement as for Christianity and civilization. For if the primary objective was to provide repatriated Africans with a free and just society, the Colony was also expected to be a base for spreading Christian and civilizing influences to the people in the interior. And essentially "civilization" meant abandoning the slave trade and associated odious habits; undertaking commercial relations with Britain and reaping the resulting benefits. For how could mass evangelization succeed and the African enjoy his newly-found spiritual benefits, if he did not simultaneously change his way of life and abandon at least some of his more atrocious customs? Clearly, then, Christianity and civilization were the opposite side of the same coin. This twin-objective became the fount of missionary

¹⁵Howse, pp. 46-50. For a more detailed background, consult Curtin, pp. 106-119.

policy in the 19th century. For example, we note the specific instructions given to the first CMS missionary to Sierra Leone: 'You will take all prudent occasions of weaning the Native Chiefs from this traffic . . .'.¹⁶

The same impulse that in 1787 established a Negro Colony in Sierra Leone, sent the first English mission to India and dispatched a chaplain to Botany Bay with the first convicts (Botany Bay was chosen over Sierra Leone for its climate)¹⁷, led also to a project for an Evangelical missionary society.

Following the foundation of the Sierra Leone Company, the Eclectic Society (a society representing London Evangelical clergymen and members of Clapham) became interested in the means for propagating the Gospel in Africa. At first there was much skepticism: the majority feared the opposition of Bishops and of interfering with the activities of the S.P.G. and S.P.C.K.¹⁸ Only two or three believed anything could be accomplished from within the Church. One of these was Charles Simeon.

¹⁶C. P. Groves, The Planting of Christianity in Africa (4 vols.; London: Lutterworth Press, 1948), Vol. I, p. 214.

¹⁷C. Fyfe, A History of Sierra Leone (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 7.

¹⁸Balleine, pp. 139-140. The S.P.G. was a great public organization founded by High Churchmen in 1702. In the course of the 18th century various missions were established in the British colonies of North America and in the West Indies. Limited by its charter to British territories and dependencies, this society did not commence its work among the "heathens" outside the British Empire until 1826. But even within the empire, it had, by the time the CMS was founded, abandoned its work among non-Europeans. Living on investment and receiving very little encouragement from donations and subscriptions, it was scarcely in a position to expand. The S.P.C.K., also the result of High Church attempts at national reformation, was founded as a private voluntary organization in 1698. This society did some very valuable work in disseminating religious tracts throughout the world, in establishing thousands of Charity schools, and in establishing a mission in Trinquibar, India. See Balleine, pp. 126-27, 142; E. Stock, The History of the Church Missionary Society (3 vols.; London: CMS, 1899), Vol. I, pp. 22-24.

The first of these is the fact that the system is not self-sufficient. It is not possible to produce all the goods and services that are needed for the system to function. This is because the system is based on a division of labour, and the different parts of the system are not self-sufficient. This means that the system is dependent on the rest of the world for the goods and services that it needs.

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As the originator and most persistent supporter of a separate Evangelical missionary society, Simeon naturally brought the matter to Clapham councils. For a number of years the idea was tossed about among the leading spirits of both Clapham and the Eclectic Society.¹⁹ Finally, at a meeting of the Eclectic Society of March 18th, 1799, Simeon's proposal for a missionary society was adopted and it was decided to establish it immediately.

Formally instituted on April 12th, 1799, the "Society for Missions to Africa and the East"²⁰ revealed both its Claphamite and Evangelical character. William Wilberforce and Charles Grant became Vice-Presidents; John Venn was made Chairman of the General Committee; Henry Thornton was made Treasurer; Thomas Scott became the first Secretary. Venn insisted that the Society be conducted 'on the church principle; but not on the High Church principle'. Pratt (a member of the Committee) added that it must 'be kept in Evangelical hands'.²¹

Clearly the founders were anxious, faithful as they were to the principles of the Established Church, to distinguish the

¹⁹They were probably influenced by the fact that while the Anglican church stood still, the Nonconformist groups had gone ahead and established their own missionary societies. The Methodists were the first to organize a system of foreign missions in 1787. (Halevy p. 446). The Baptists followed with the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792. In 1795 evangelicals co-operated to establish the London Missionary Society on a broad undenominational basis, but it later became the organ of the English Congregational body. Several denominations also co-operated to establish the Edinburgh and Glasgow Missionary Societies (1796), but they both became dominated by the Presbyterian Church. Alec R. Vidler, The Church in an Age of Revolution (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 249.

²⁰The name "Church Missionary Society" first used as an abbreviation was officially adopted in 1812.

²¹Howse, p. 76.

new society from missionary organizations founded or dominated by Dissenting bodies. Foremost on their minds was the recent demonstration by the London Missionary Society of the impracticability of interdenominational co-operation in missionary, as distinguished from philanthropic enterprise. At the same time, however, the CMS was to remain the vehicle of the Evangelical party. Venn rejected the High Church doctrine that no missionary enterprise could be undertaken without episcopal leadership, and that an ordained man was ipso facto fit to be a missionary.²² The work of conversion was to be done by Christians, but only by Christians of Evangelical persuasion. The S.P.G. and S.P.C.K. were unsuitable for this purpose; not only were they non-Evangelical (of course both began as High Church organizations and perhaps were suspected of being still; the S.P.C.K., at least could only be described as mildly High Church, in view of its co-operation with Lutherans), but they also denied Evangelicals influence in their bodies.²³ These were then the factors pressing for an Anglican but strictly Evangelical missionary society.

The Church Missionary Society kept its policy making and expenditure in lay not in ecclesiastical control.²⁴ The decision-making General Committee²⁵ originally consisted of 24 members of

²²Stock, I, p. 65.

²³Ibid., p. 66, Balleine, pp. 142-43.

²⁴Roland Oliver, The Missionary Factor in East Africa (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1952), p. 5.

²⁵The Committee of Correspondence (later referred to as the Parent Committee) was also created in 1799. Its function was "to obtain, train, and superintend the missionaries" and to correspond with them. Stock, I, p. 71. In effect this Committee directed the work of foreign missions but it was left to the General Committee to decide where missions were to be established. The Committee of Correspondence's decisions were communicated to the Mission Secretaries by the Secretaries of the Society, who became the voice of the Committee.

which half were laymen and half clergymen. This constitution revised in 1812 made the elected General Committee a lay body with the stipulation that all subscribing members were entitled to attend Committee meetings with full voting rights. A democratic feature was that every subscribing member had the privilege to vote at the Annual General Meeting.²⁶

²⁶Ibid., p. 109.

2. THE SIERRA LEONE EXPERIENCE

EARLY WORK IN SIERRA LEONE

The CMS chose to establish its first mission among the Susu people, on the Rio Pongas about one hundred miles north of Sierra Leone. This was a logical choice, in view of Clapham's vested interests in the Colony and the unsuccessful past attempts by several missionary societies, namely the Baptists, London, and Scottish societies, at establishing permanent missions in the Fula and Susu hinterland in the decade 1794-1804.¹ But the advantage the Society had in terms of benefits from the experience of these earlier ventures, for example in being aware of the high mortality rate for Europeans and the dissensions within the various denominations, was counterbalanced by a different sort of problem.

Having waited till 1802 but finding no volunteers, nor Bishops willing to ordain men for missionary service, the Society decided to follow the S.P.C.K's example and appeal to German Lutherans.² That an English Evangelical missionary society had to call on Germans for its inaugural and subsequent missions -- out of 24 missionaries dispatched in the first 15 years. 17 were Germans³ -- only confirms what has been already said on the 18th century British attitude to missions. This step, on the other hand, initiated a strong bond between the CMS and German missionary societies, especially the Basel Society.⁴

¹Groves, I, pp. 206-13.

²Stock, I, p. 157.

³Howse, p. 78.

⁴The Basel Society was one of the first German societies (f. 1815) with headquarters at Basel, Switzerland.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REPUBLIC OF THE UNITED STATES

The history of the Republic of the United States is a story of the growth of a nation from a small colony to a great power. It is a story of the struggles of the people to establish a government that would protect their rights and promote their welfare. The story begins with the first settlers who came to the New World in search of a better life. They found a land of opportunity, but they also found a land of conflict. The struggle for power between the different groups of settlers led to the American Revolution. The Revolution was a struggle for the right of the people to govern themselves. It was a struggle that resulted in the creation of the United States. The United States is a nation of many peoples, many languages, and many customs. It is a nation that has grown from a small colony to a great power. It is a nation that has made many contributions to the world. The history of the Republic of the United States is a story of the growth of a nation from a small colony to a great power. It is a story of the struggles of the people to establish a government that would protect their rights and promote their welfare. The story begins with the first settlers who came to the New World in search of a better life. They found a land of opportunity, but they also found a land of conflict. The struggle for power between the different groups of settlers led to the American Revolution. The Revolution was a struggle for the right of the people to govern themselves. It was a struggle that resulted in the creation of the United States. The United States is a nation of many peoples, many languages, and many customs. It is a nation that has grown from a small colony to a great power. It is a nation that has made many contributions to the world.

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The CMS became much indebted to the Basel Seminary for many of its early pioneers in West Africa and elsewhere. For example, two that feature fairly prominently in our story, C.A. Gollmer and D. Hinderer were both recruited from the Basel Seminary. The former became one of the founders of the Yoruba Mission. The debt went even further to include the services of several educators who introduced the idea of family education as practised by the Basel men in what was then the Gold Coast. In contrast to formal institutional training that allegedly made native pastors too "academic", this method had each missionary providing practical training to several wards who lived in the same mission house. The whole question of missionary education is discussed later when it becomes the center of a long controversy in the Yoruba Mission.

The first CMS missionaries, graduates of the Lutheran Berlin Missionary Seminary, reached Sierra Leone in April 1804. Little progress was made, and two years later they still had not left the Colony.⁵ Meanwhile far away in England, an event was taking place which only acquired its great significance in retrospect: 8 Susu children, brought to England by Macaulay in 1799 to be educated, were baptized by John Venn at Clapham.⁶ It is here that we have, albeit in embryo, the idea of a native agency, or the principle of using educated native Christians as emissaries of Christian and British influences among their own people. This idea was developed later by the CMS and became a permanent feature of its policy.

⁵Groves, I, pp. 214-15.

⁶Ibid., p. 201.

Encouragement to missions came also from another source, The remarkable zeal and persistence of Wilberforce and his supporters finally paid dividends, and the legal slave trade was abolished in Britain and its territories in 1807.⁷ This event, of great significance for Africa, coincided with the transfer of Sierra Leone to the Crown and the appearance of the African Institution. The latter founded in April 1807, by the directors of the now defunct Sierra Leone Company who were unwilling to abandon their mission to the Colony, had a threefold objective. To stimulate trade with Africa, to promote African education, and to act as a watchdog against the slave trade.⁸ This combination of favourable circumstances provided the necessary inspiration, and the CMS mission on the Rio Pongas was finally established in March, 1808.

The Abolition Act did not end the slave trade. It was carried on -- even illicitly by British subjects -- under Portuguese, Spanish, Brazilian and American colours, and even rose from an average of 80,000 exported annually in the decade preceding 1807⁹ to approx. 125,000 by about 1830.¹⁰ The reasons

⁷ Readers seeking the background could consult Halévy, pp. 457-59; Balleine, pp. 119-20; J. H. Overton, The Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth century (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1907), p. 133. The Act received the Royal Assent on 25 March, 1807.

⁸ Fyfe, p. 105.

⁹ A. P. Newton, "British Enterprise in Tropical Africa," 1783-1870, CHBE, Vol. II (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1940), p. 643.

¹⁰ J. D. Fage, An Introduction to the History of West Africa (3rd ed.; Cambridge: University Press, 1962), p. 101.

for the trade's persistence are discussed later in connection with the question of legitimate trade. It is sufficient to state at this point that the diplomatic pressures on countries like Portugal and Spain, to restrict or outlaw their slave trade, resulted only in the passing of laws, not in their enforcement.¹¹ Britain remained the only country with a permanent naval squadron -- the preventive squadron -- for the specific aim of intercepting slavers. Both the squadron and the vice-admiralty court in Free-town were established as the result of pressures from the African Institution.¹² Soon the preventive squadron was dumping its cargoes of captured slaves in the Colony. By 1814, there were already 10,000 liberated Africans¹³ there, and 39,936 were landed between 1808 and 1833.¹⁴

Thus unforeseen circumstances were changing the aim of the original founders. Instead of a home for Negro refugees from Britain and Nova Scotia, it was rapidly becoming a melting pot mainly for Yoruba, but also for Ibo, Nupe and Hausa, recently torn from family and country as a result of the Yoruba wars.¹⁵

¹¹Groves, I, p. 273. For example in 1810 Portugal forbade her subjects to carry the trade outside her territories in Africa, and both Portugal in 1815 and Spain in 1817 were bribed to limit their trade to the southern hemisphere.

¹²Howse, pp. 139-40.

¹³Groves, I, p. 217.

¹⁴M. P. Banton, West African City (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 4.

¹⁵The Yoruba consisting mainly of Oyo, Egba, Ijebu, Ijesa, and Ife became the most numerous group. The Oyo-Yoruba called Akus (Ackoos, Acoos, Ockoos) -- derived from the first syllable of the word they used when greeting -- were the predominant group in 1830. During the 1830's, however, as a result of the destruction of Egba towns, the Egba became more numerous than the Oyo. J. F. A. Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891 (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1965), pp. 21 & 25. For a description of the Yoruba wars, see below pp. 33 ff.

These new factors, and perhaps the obvious difficulties of working among the interior tribes, seemed to have convinced the Society that its efforts were more urgently needed among the liberated slaves. In 1817 the CMS transferred its mission station from the interior to the Colony.¹⁶

LIBERATED AFRICANS IN SIERRA LEONE

When Sierra Leone was officially chosen as a rehabilitation centre, it was with the expectation that the Colony would operate in this capacity until these people were enlisted in the Royal African Corps or West Indian Regiments, or apprenticed to artisans or traders. The unexpected increase in population, however, soon put great pressure on military recruitment and the apprenticeship system, both of which could of course only absorb a limited number. A way to relieve the pressure on land and other resources was urgently needed. It was not long before the Administration received permission to settle the new arrivals in farming villages outside Freetown. There, they were assigned to plots of land and encouraged to become self-supporting peasant producers. The village system was officially adopted by Governor MacCarthy on his arrival in the Colony in 1816.¹⁷

These plans merged conveniently with CMS policy, for it was generally agreed that the way to "civilize" the African was to train him to earn his livelihood and make him self-reliant. Villagers were encouraged to attend church services and some kind of schooling where Bible reading, industrial and agricultural training, were provided.¹⁸ Efforts in this direc-

¹⁶J. H. Kopytoff, A Preface to Modern Nigeria (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), p. 24.

¹⁷Kopytoff, p. 24.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 31.

tion, however, went beyond the village school.

A central residential school, the Christian Institution, was opened in 1816 to provide recaptive children with instruction in various useful trades and the science of farming. The most promising ones were to be given training as teachers or missionaries.¹⁹ After a good start, the number of children there soon proved to be a financial liability. Groping for a solution, the Society turned to Governor MacCarthy's suggestion that those suited to be tradesmen or labourers receive their training in jobs in and around the villages. The school could then be converted to a seminary for a select few to study the classics, Arabic, and other languages.²⁰

A nucleus of boys was retained, and the new institution rechristened as a seminary opened in 1820. While industrial training was no longer central, the curriculum was supposed theoretically to combine industrial training with academic learning.²¹ The new school made good progress, but again various difficulties--the most serious problem was to find replacements for European teachers who regularly died on the coast -- compelled the dismissal of its last pupils in 1826.²² But the Parent Committee was reluctant to abandon the project because its members had by now become convinced that the future of Christianity in Africa laid in training Africans as agents of the Society.²³ An appeal was sent to Rev. Haensel, a tutor at the

¹⁹Fyfe, p. 127.

²⁰Ibid., p. 131; Kopytoff, p. 34.

²¹Kopytoff, pp. 34-35.

²²Fyfe, p. 153.

²³Ibid., p. 172.

Basel Missionary Society, and under his direction it re-opened on a new site in February 1827 as the Fourah Bay Institution.²⁴

This time, however, the Society pressed for trained African agents abandoned the "industrial training" component of its educational system. With heavy emphasis on the humanities, the new curriculum consisted of English, Arabic, West African languages, Scriptures and Bible translations, Music, and manual exercise.²⁵ Intended basically as a vocational school for missionary needs, it became the foremost center for the training of indigenous assistants, such as schoolmasters and catechists. By 1841, 39 students had completed its course.²⁶ A number of the school's graduate like Teophilus King and Thomas Babington Macaulay figure later in our story, but one cannot leave without introducing the College's first student who was destined to become Bishop of the Niger.

One of the earliest victim of the Yoruba wars was the boy Adjai. Made prisoner when the Oyo town of Osógun was sacked in 1821, he exchanged hands many times before being finally rescued by the British Navy. Liberated in Freetown in 1822, he was sent to school in Bathurst village where he learned to read and write; he also learned carpentry from Weeks, also a future Bishop. His exceptional qualities of leadership, character, and devotion soon became apparent and he was baptized as Samuel Crowther in 1825. After a few weeks at a parish school in England, he returned in 1827 to become the first student at Fourah

²⁴Stock, I, p. 336.

²⁵Kopytoff, p. 35.

²⁶Ibid.

Bay.²⁷ In 1829 he was sent out to teach in various mission and government schools. Crowther also began his studies of the Yoruba language which resulted in the publication of his Grammar and Vocabulary of the Yoruba language in 1863, and a revised dictionary in 1870.²⁸

By 1841 he was sufficiently prominent to be selected for the Niger Expedition. His many-sided contributions, particularly his Journal of the Expedition²⁹, probably accelerated his ordination in October 1843. Yoruba, however, was where his heart lay and his return there in 1845, as one of the first CMS missionaries, stirred many of the liberated Africans to follow his example as "missionaries" to their own people.³⁰

Men like Crowther were of course exceptional, and Fourah Bay did not on the whole come up to expectations. It languished in the 1830's; most of its pupils entered government and mercantile careers, a few inadequately trained pupils became teachers.³¹ In other words, the school found itself serving commercial rather than missionary ends.

Some of the European missionaries protested that academic training was turning Africans into educated snobs. They became contemptuous of manual or agricultural tasks and interested not in the Church but in more lucrative opportunities in commerce.

²⁷ Stock, I, pp. 449-51.

²⁸ Ajayi, pp. 26; 127-29.

²⁹ See below p. 27.

³⁰ Fyfe, p. 236; see also a biographical sketch of Crowther in Kopytoff, p. 285.

³¹ Fyfe, pp. 236-37.

It was probably the disappointments of this period that gave rise to the idea that Fourah Bay was unsuitable for the training of indigenous pastors. A glance at the economic opportunities available to Africans will demonstrate the inadequacy of this theory.

The drifting away from the initial focus on apprenticeship training in CMS educational practice coincided with, perhaps even reflected a readjustment to, the general failure of farming in the Colony. The key factor was the unsuitability of the soil in and around Freetown, rather than the Sierra Leonians' distaste for agricultural pursuits as alleged by European sources.³² Not only was farming land scarce but so were opportunities in general: markets, employment, and so on.³³

A contemporary African source reminded those who expressed concern at the failure of the civilizing policy that Africans could rarely find wage employment. The great opportunities were in trade.³⁴ There, the Africans could enter as middlemen, or as agents for European merchants in Freetown. A few became successful traders and men of substance. But even in trade, stresses Ajayi, success did not come so easily. Many Sierra Leonians, therefore, began to look beyond the Colony for greater opportunities. By 1838 a number of them, either singly or in collective ventures, had bought old slave-vessels and traded down the coast to Badagry and Lagos.³⁵

³²Kopytoff, p. 30. Henceforth, liberated Africans are referred to as Sierra Leonians.

³³Ajayi, p. 27.

³⁴Kopytoff, p. 31.

³⁵Ajayi, pp. 25-27.

With respect to conversion to Christianity, the achievements are perhaps more difficult to assess. In 1836 out of an estimated population of 35,000, the CMS counted an attendance of 6,500 at their chapels and churches.³⁶ There were a further 1,337 in the Wesleyan body.³⁷ Clearly Sierra Leone had not become the Christian Colony envisaged by the founders. But statistics do not tell the whole story. It is difficult to know how many became genuine Christians, remained Moslems, or continued to adhere to their traditional religion. Of those who supposedly adopted Christianity, one is left with the impression that the majority, conscious of the benefits of European ways, were actually more Europeanized than Christianized.

The significant thing, however, is that the Evangelicals had not wasted their efforts. In November 1839 a group of Yoruba Sierra Leonian merchants, anticipating Thomas Fowell Buxton's ideas, petitioned the Governor of Sierra Leone for government and missionary support in establishing a British Colony at Badagry. The petitioners hoped their presence, together with those of the missionaries, would hasten the extirpation of the slave trade and the adoption of Christianity in their country.³⁸ The story of the next few years is that these people did not wait for British initiative to immigrate to Badagry.

Finally, the missionary impact in Sierra Leone must be assessed against one dominant sociological fact. Circumstances saw the refugees settled in tribally homogeneous villages; these

³⁶ Kopytoff, p. 23.

³⁷ Groves, I, p. 289.

³⁸ Kopytoff, p. 37; Ajayi, pp. 27-28.

were known as Aku town, Egba Town or Ibo Town. This is important in understanding the general strengthening of identity, inevitably accompanied by a retention of local customs, language, and village institutions and the general yearning for the homeland³⁹ that took place. This nostalgia, together with the economic and evangelical aspirations already enumerated, must have exercised a strong pull for not a few to sail down the coast to the Bight of Benin. British interest in the meantime was focused not in Lagos or Badagry but on the Niger Delta.

NEW TACTICS IN THE SUPPRESSION OF THE SLAVE TRADE -- THE NIGER
EXPEDITION OF 1841

As we have seen, the transatlantic slave trade grew in spite of British efforts to suppress it. The anti-slavery squadron had a very limited effect on the trade as a whole. Until 1835 its efforts were hampered by the provision that slavers could be condemned only if slaves were actually found on board. The "equipment" clause included in a treaty with Spain in 1835 allowed for seizure of vessels if found equipped for the trade. Portugal signed a similar treaty in 1842.⁴⁰ But even this "breakthrough" did not have a significant effect on the trade.

The trade persisted primarily because of conditions in West Africa and the demand in the Americas. The enforcement of the 1807 Act had initiated a revolution in the relations between Europeans and African middlemen. From a predominantly slave-trading economy, West Africa was changing to an economy

³⁹Kopytoff, pp. 28-29.

⁴⁰Curtin, p. 300. The United States refused to recognize such treaties until the end of the Civil War. It was general practice for foreign ships to raise the American flag and claim immunity. A. Burns, History of Nigeria (6th ed.; London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), p. 104.

based on the exchange of African raw materials for British manufactured goods.⁴¹ In fact many of the economic and political problems in which missionaries, consuls, and merchants became involved in the 1840's and 1850's, resulted largely from the attempt of African states to adjust (some to resist) to the demands made by Europe.

The co-existence of both legitimate and slave trades demonstrates how the adjustment was made. By the 1820's and 1830's palm-oil produced in the "Oil Rivers" region of eastern Nigeria had become an important raw material for the British soap industry.⁴² The "Liverpool traders" had swiftly adjusted to the new conditions by adapting their resources and methods from the slave trade to the trade in oil. They had no need to penetrate inland but simply continued with the "trust" system⁴³ on which was based the middleman monopoly of the coastal tribes. Now the British ex-slavers, in accordance with their new economic interests, were opposing non-British slavery and exercising pressures on the British government to step up its anti-slavery campaign, and to use Fernando Po as a base for such activity.⁴⁴

Newbury has shed some light on this question. He suggests that by the 1840's the essential factor in the relation between palm-oil and the slave trade was the African demand for such goods as cotton, gunpowder and arms, in place of specie. By that time, supplies of cheap tobacco and rum from Brazil

⁴¹K. O. Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 4-5.

⁴²Curtin, p. 295. Curtin points out that by the mid-1830's half the value of West African exports to Britain was in this single product.

⁴³See below pp. 49 ff.

⁴⁴Dike, pp. 57-62.

were running short and the Brazilian traders at Whydah, in addition to their business in slaves, were organizing the trade in palm-oil in order to purchase from Europe the kind of goods demanded by Africans.⁴⁵

The humanitarians of the 1830's and 1840's discovered a new remedy for the suppression of the slave trade. The solution was to penetrate inland and encourage (or force) Africans to channel their energies to the development of their own natural resources, for the mutual benefit of Britain and Africa. In 1830 a major obstacle was removed. The discovery of the mouth of the Niger by the Lander brothers made potentially realizable all those dreams of penetrating the Western Sudan via the Niger. The new possibility encouraged a new school of thought that advocated shifting the trader frontier from the seaboard to the hinterland.⁴⁶ In this way, by dealing directly with the producers, the monopoly of the middlemen would be undermined and the social conditions engendering slavery would be eliminated.

This new school motivated at once by humanitarian, commercial, and scientific reasons was echoed in Exeter Hall (the Evangelical centre where the various societies held their meetings) and in the ideas of T. F. Buxton, Buxton is famous for having taken over from Wilberforce the anti-slavery crusade. The Emancipation Act of 1833 crowned his parliamentary career, and after that he became increasingly concerned at finding a new method to end the slave trade in West Africa. He discovered the

⁴⁵ C. W. Newbury, The Western Slave Coast and its Rulers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 42.

⁴⁶ Dike, p. 60.

great remedy for Africa in the famous slogan of "Bible and Plough". "It is the Bible and the plough that must regenerate Africa" wrote Buxton in his famous and influential Slave Trade and its Remedy, (1840). As a vehicle for this objective, he founded with others the "Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade and the Civilization of Africa" (African Civilization Society) at Exeter Hall in July, 1839.⁴⁷

Buxton's plan called for an intensification of the campaign against the slave trade by a more adequate naval preventive force. A new tactic was to sign treaties with chiefs on the banks of the Niger. Treaties were to induce African "states" to give up the slave trade and to embrace legitimate activities involving the exchange of raw material for British manufactures. The plan included the acquisition of territory for a trading factory and a model farm.⁴⁸ Missionary societies were to take care of the "Bible" side of things and penetrate inland.

In principle this plan formed the objectives of the Niger Expedition of 1841,⁴⁹ organized jointly by the government, Evangelicals, and the Agricultural Society representing mercantile interests. Along with officials and scientists were two representatives of the CMS, the Rev. J. P. Schön and Samuel Ajayi Crowther.⁵⁰ This clearly indicates the close connection

⁴⁷ J. Gallagher, "Fowell Buxton and the New African Policy 1838-42", CHJ, X, I, 41-43.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ The British government, not prepared to commit itself to acquisition of territory, distinguished between two stages: expedition and annexation. Commissioners accompanying the expedition were instructed merely to report on the possibilities for annexation. Ibid., p. 46.

⁵⁰ Biobaku, p. 30; Howard J. Pedrazza, Borrioboola-Gha (London: Oxford University Press), pp. 25-26.

that the CMS had with the A.C.S. and the Expedition. Missionary societies shared the enthusiasm fostered by the new possibilities and, though they each had their own plans for Africa, it was essentially the doctrine of Buxton about the civilization of Africa which they developed.⁵¹

Although the Niger Expedition succeeded in signing a couple of anti-slave treaties with African potentates, and in the establishment of an agricultural experimental station that was later abandoned, it failed miserably. The much publicised death rate marred even its smallest achievement.⁵² Discredited, Buxton's public career came to an end, but his ideas lived on in his follower, Henry Venn, to become the blue print for the Yoruba Mission.

Schön's observations and recommendations had a more immediate influence on CMS policy. He accurately observed that the African climate was inimical to the European, but falsely concluded that the African's survival was due to racial immunity.⁵³ Along with Crowther, he urged that the CMS expand with the aid of native agents trained in Sierra Leone.⁵⁴ Schön reiterated the need to enlarge Fourah Bay to meet this need.⁵⁵ Together, then, Schön and Crowther provided the inspiration that revived Fourah Bay.

Fourah Bay was transferred to a new site in 1845 and re-

⁵¹Curtin, pp. 303, 312.

⁵²K. O. Dike, Origins of the Niger Mission 1841-1891 (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1962), p. 7.

⁵³J. F. Schön and S. Crowther, Journal of an Expedition up the Niger in 1841 (London 1843). For an outline of Schön's report, see Groves, II, pp. 13-18.

⁵⁴Fyfe, p. 236.

⁵⁵Groves, II, p. 16.

opened in 1848. In an attempt to remedy past deficiencies, the school was expanded to accommodate not only teachers and catechists, but candidates for orders. The children of the new commercial classes more interested in secular occupations were encouraged to acquire their secondary education at the Grammar School also opened by the CMS in 1845.⁵⁶ The "new" Fourah Bay was now nearer to what it had originally intended to be -- a training institution for the African clergy. By 1890 Fourah Bay College, as it came to be known in 1864, had educated a large proportion of the African clergy ordained for the Yoruba and Niger Mission.⁵⁷ Yet the conviction that Sierra Leone (Fourah Bay or Freetown Grammar) academic education was inappropriate persisted and was frequently regarded as being responsible for everything missionaries disliked about educated Africans.

THE RETURN OF THE EXILES TO YORUBA

We have dwelled on the incentives and motives spurring Sierra Leonians to leave for their former homeland. The Niger Expedition had a good deal of publicity, and as a result many people were excited and ready to follow the Expedition to the banks of the Niger. But the venture failed and the immigration to Western Nigeria primarily via Badagry continued in the 1840's. By 1844 it was estimated that 3,000 Sierra Leonians, primarily Egba, had found their way inland from Badagry to the Egba capital, Abeokuta.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Fyfe, p. 237.

⁵⁷Out of 25 who received formal training beyond the primary level, 14 had attended Fourah Bay. Ajayi, p. 152.

⁵⁸Newbury, p. 44.

The selection of Badagry as a route to the interior was not accidental. Circumstances had ended Badagry's earlier commercial prosperity and, therefore, the Sierra Leonians were welcomed because they came with promises to revive trade.⁵⁹ But Badagry was also politically weak and, of all the towns on the Bight of Benin, least able to resist European influences. For this reason, and of course because the Sierra Leonians were already there, Badagry became the obvious place, as we shall see shortly, to begin the missionary penetration of Nigeria.

The clue to all this is that the country the emigrants had returned to was not the country they had left. In the intervening years, internal stresses in Yoruba, combined with the Fulani advance in the north and British pressures from the south, had resulted in major political, social, and economic upheavals that were not resolved until the end of the 19th century.

⁵⁹ See below p. 44.

3. THE YORUBA SETTING

TERMINOLOGY AND LOCATION

The term "Yoruba" is said to have derived from a foreign nickname, meaning cunning, given to the most northerly of the Yoruba tribes -- that is, the Eyeos or Oyos of the Kingdom of Oyo -- by the Hausa and Fulani.¹ By custom, "Oyo" and "Yoruba" became interchangeable terms. The Oyo regarded themselves as the original Yoruba on the ground (according to their own tradition) that Prince Oranmiyan, one of the sons of Odudua -- the mythical creator of the Yoruba nation, personally founded Old Oyo (Katunga), the capital, and became their first king (Alafin) somewhere between 1390 and 1440.²

Oyo rose as a military power in the 15th century, swept south, and during the following two centuries rallied their Yoruba kin in the west and south into a kind of feudal state.³ The Oyo kings used their alleged lineal descent from Odudua to justify their political and ritual supremacy over all the Yoruba princes and chiefs,⁴ inhabiting the savanna-forest belt between the lower Niger and the Bight of Benin.

When 18th century observers spoke of the Yoruba, they generally meant only the people of Oyo province in the Oyo con-

¹Daryll Forde, The Yoruba - Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria (London: International African Institute, 1962), p. 1; James L. Gibbs (ed.), Peoples of Africa (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p. 551.

²J. Egharevba, A Short History of Benin (3d ed.; Ibadan: University Press, 1960), p. 8; M. Crowder, The Story of Nigeria (2d ed.; London: Faber & Faber, 1966), p. 55.

³Peter Morton Williams, "The Oyo-Yoruba and the Atlantic Trade 1670-1830," JHSN, III, 1 (1964), 25.

⁴Samuel Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, ed. O. Johnson (Reprint of 1921 1st ed.; Lagos: CMS Bookshops, 1957), p. 41.

federation or empire. Other Yoruba groups, in the empire or on its periphery, were designated by the name of their tribe or kingdom; that is, Egba, Ondo, Ife, Ijebu, Ketu, Egbado, and so on.⁵ Then in the mid 19th century, European missionaries introduced Yoruba as a generic term.⁶

THE YORUBA EMPIRE OF OYO

At its height in the 18th century, the Oyo empire extended its authority over most of the Yoruba-speaking peoples. Under its administration was Oyo-Yoruba and Ilorin in the north, Ketu in the west, the Egba and Egbado kingdoms in the south. To the south-east it extended to the Ijesha and Ife tribes to include the Ondo, Owu, and some of the Ijebu chiefdoms. Parts of Borgu and Nupe to the north, Dahomey and the Gun of Porto Novo to the west, paid tribute to the Alafin of Oyo.⁷ In the extreme south-east, Oyo was bounded by the independent state of Benin.

The economic power of the Oyo was based on the profits reaped as informal middlemen in the trade between Hausaland and the city-states on the Yoruba coastline, and on the annual tributes paid by vassal chiefs. Oyo's main export was slaves. They were usually bought from the Hausa and taken along well established routes to the trading forts; there the Oyo were content to let local traders handle the European shippers.⁸

⁵Gibbs, p. 551.

⁶History and Archeology in Africa, a report of a conference held in July 1953, School of Oriental and African Studies (London: S.O.A.S., 1955), pp. 55-57.

⁷A. B. Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa (Reprint of 1894 1st ed.; Netherlands: Anthropological Publications, 1966), pp. 9-10; Fage, pp. 89-90; see also Morton-Williams, JHSN, III, 1, 27.

⁸Kopytoff, p. 14.

The first part of the report is devoted to a description of the work done during the year. It is divided into two main sections, the first of which deals with the work done in the laboratory and the second with the work done in the field.

LABORATORY WORK

The work done in the laboratory during the year has been devoted to the study of the properties of the various types of soil. It has been found that the properties of the soil vary with the type of soil and with the depth at which it is found. The work has also been devoted to the study of the effect of the various factors on the growth of the plants. It has been found that the growth of the plants is affected by the amount of light, the amount of water, and the amount of food.

The work done in the field during the year has been devoted to the study of the growth of the plants in the various types of soil. It has been found that the growth of the plants is affected by the amount of light, the amount of water, and the amount of food. The work has also been devoted to the study of the effect of the various factors on the growth of the plants.

The work done during the year has been devoted to the study of the properties of the various types of soil and to the study of the effect of the various factors on the growth of the plants. It has been found that the properties of the soil vary with the type of soil and with the depth at which it is found. The work has also been devoted to the study of the effect of the various factors on the growth of the plants.

The notes of the 1825 and 1829 expeditions to Sokoto through Yoruba left by Clapperton and the Landers are invaluable in reconstructing the major trade routes of the period. A closely administered track of territory from Old Oyo cut across Yorubaland in a south-westerly direction, passed through Saki and Igboho, down through Egbado terminating at Ipokia (the southermost limit of Oyo territory): from Ipokia traffic went south-west to Porto Novo or directly south to Badagry.⁹ Oyo did not reach the coast but exercised an informal political sway over the Awori trade corridor from Ipokia southward, and over the abovementioned ports through which slaves were exported.

THE DECAY OF THE EMPIRE

The empire was more than a lot of peoples gathered together by military conquests and held together by economic interests. Until the end of the 18th century, Oyo had provided peace, stability, and cultural leadership to many millions but like other empires before it and since it had the seeds of its own decay.

The cracks began to appear during the reign of Alafin Abiodun (1774-1789), "the last of the Kings that held the different parts of the Kingdom together in one universal sway..."¹⁰ In 1783 Borgu defeated an Oyo army and was never again brought into the fold. In the west, Dahomey failed to pay tribute in 1781 and again in 1784, and in 1789 she attacked Ketu -- Oyo's most westerly province -- but no retaliation took place as it

⁹Morton-Williams, JHSN, III, 1, 34-37; see map at end and also P. D. Curtin and J. Vansina, "Sources of the nineteenth century Atlantic slave trade," JAH, V, 2 (1964), 185-208.

¹⁰Johnson, p. 187; the date for Abiodun's reign is the one given by Crowder, p. 112.

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coincided with an Oyo expedition against Nupe. Dahomey made another bid to end its tribute in 1797, but Oyo was still sufficiently powerful to retain an ever-weakening grip until finally defeated by a Dahomi army in 1821. Two years after Abiodun's death, Nupe routed an Oyo army and declared independence.¹¹ Within the empire proper, the Egba overthrew the Oyo yoke probably somewhere between 1775 and 1780.¹² The decisive blow, however, came with the Fulani conquest of Ilorin.

The Fulani Jihad of 1804 initiated the great upheavals of the Western Sudan that led to the substitution of Fulani power for Hausa in the states of Hausaland, and Fulani incursions into Yorubaland for most of the first half of the 19th century. Afonja, the Yoruba governor of Ilorin, sought the aid of the Fulani who had penetrated his province in his rebellion against the central government. After making an unsuccessful attempt to capture the Oyo throne, he retired to a semi-independent position at Ilorin.¹³ By about 1825, Afonja was killed by the Fulani mercenaries who had initially supported him. Ilorin was turned into a Fulani emirate and connections with Yoruba severed.¹⁴ Fulani armies proceeded to overrun and destroy a large number of northern Yoruba towns, forcing large masses of refugees to flee southward in the towns along the forest margin. In the process, the southern provinces suffered not only a large increase in population but also a destruction of many of their towns.¹⁵

¹¹Crowder, pp. 112-13; Morton-Williams, JHSN, III, 1, 34.

¹²S. Biobaku, The Egba and their Neighbours 1842-1872 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 9.

¹³Ellis, p. 10-11.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁵Ajayi, p. 19.

(and hence) large enough numbers of \mathcal{A} to satisfy

the following: \mathcal{A} is not a subset of \mathcal{B} for any \mathcal{B} in \mathcal{C} .

Let \mathcal{A} be a set of n elements. Let \mathcal{B} be a set of m elements.

Let \mathcal{C} be a collection of k sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{D} be a collection of l sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{E} be a collection of p sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{F} be a collection of q sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{G} be a collection of r sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{H} be a collection of s sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{I} be a collection of t sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{J} be a collection of u sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{K} be a collection of v sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{L} be a collection of w sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{M} be a collection of x sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{N} be a collection of y sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{O} be a collection of z sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{P} be a collection of a sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{Q} be a collection of b sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{R} be a collection of c sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{S} be a collection of d sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{T} be a collection of e sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{U} be a collection of f sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{V} be a collection of g sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{W} be a collection of h sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{X} be a collection of i sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{Y} be a collection of j sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{Z} be a collection of k sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{A} be a collection of l sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Let \mathcal{B} be a collection of m sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{B} .

Let \mathcal{C} be a collection of n sets, each of which is a subset of \mathcal{A} .

Another ramification of the Fulani thrust was a complete closing of the Niger slave reservoir causing an interruption to the Hausa-Oyo-Badagry trade route and a disruption of the Oyo in their position as middlemen. This oddly enough coincided with a rise in the demand for slaves in the Lagos-Badagry area. Paradoxically, the efforts of the preventive squadron succeeded only in driving the trade to the relatively unknown and safe ports of Lagos and Badagry.¹⁶ The prominence of these towns as large slave ports therefore date from this period. This was also the time when the Spanish and Portuguese colonies were asserting their independence and demanding slaves for their developing plantations.¹⁷ Thus, the demand for slaves on the one hand, and the anarchic conditions on the other, combined to provide a constant stream of slaves to the Atlantic ports. Everyone entered the business of capturing his neighbour: the Ijebu sold the Egba, the Oyo sold the Ijesha, the Fulani sold the Oyo, and the Egba sold the Ijebu and the Otta.¹⁸ These were then the factors that precipitated the Yoruba wars and completed the work of shattering the authority of Oyo.

THE YORUBA WARS

It is necessary to look at who was fighting whom, and the reasons, in order to understand the political realignments that took place on the eve of missionary penetration. Yoruba in the second and third decade of the 19th century was in the grip of a vicious circle. Wars supplied captives, and the increase in demand provided higher profits, which in turn stimu-

¹⁶Kopytoff, p. 11.

¹⁷Ajayi, p. 20.

¹⁸Kopytoff, pp. 19-20.

lated further kidnapping, and as a result the grievances that had initially provoked hostilities persisted. The Ijebu in the hinterland of Lagos relying mainly on the Ife suppliers in their back country became the important middlemen. The Ife, in turn, engaged in capturing Oyo refugees and anyone else they were able to kidnap.

The Owu war of 1821 began as an attempt by an Owu chief to end the kidnapping activities of the Ife. In the ensuing engagement, the Owu defeated the Ife and destroyed a number of their towns. Five years later a trading quarrel led to a renewal of hostilities. This time, however, an Ife-Ijebu alliance joined by Oyo refugees fleeing south defeated the Owu and chased them in neighbouring Egba territory. The Egba tried to remain neutral but their towns were destroyed one by one, as freebooting armies consisting largely of Oyo refugees rampaged the countryside. Incidentally the Ijebu-Ife victory was decisive because the Ijebu, being nearer the coast, had access to European arms and gunpowder. For those who had no such supplies it became a question of survival to acquire them. Thousands of people were rendered homeless or kidnapped as slaves. Only Ibadan remained a recognizable site and in 1829 the Ijebu, Ife, and Oyo forces settled there. There also moved the homeless Egba.¹⁹

Much strife soon developed among the various factions at Ibadan.²⁰ The Egba were ill at ease, and when they realized that they were only tolerated as a source of slaves, they decided

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 15-16; Crowder, p. 119; Johnson, p. 20.

²⁰Johnson, p. 225.

to move on further south. General Shodeke led the exodus that founded Abeokuta or 'Under Stone' in 1830.²¹ Though the Oyo capital was moved to a new site further south (New Oyo) in 1837, and the Fulani advance halted at the battle of Oshogbo (ca. 1840), other groups apart from the Egba had taken advantage of the quasi-anarchic conditions to declare their independence from Oyo. By 1840 the Oyo empire had given way to the following successor "states": Oyo-Yoruba, Egba, Ketu, Ibadan, Ijebu Ode and Ijebu Remo, Ijesha, and Ife.²²

THE PEOPLES BETWEEN YORUBALAND AND THE SEA

The coastal trading center of Badagry owed its commercial development as a slave mart to the rise of the kingdom of Dahomey. In the latter part of the 17th century, much of Oyo's trade flowed westward through areas like Allada (Old Ardra) and terminated at ports like Whydah and Jacquin. These areas were absorbed by Dahomey, when it entered the slave trade as middlemen and extended to the sea in the first three decades of the 18th century. Over the next half century or so, Oyo found itself moving its trade route progressively eastward and away from Dahomey's line of communication. Abiodun re-organized Oyo's trade through newly colonized Egbado territory, leading to Porto Novo as before but increasingly to Badagry.²³ Badagry thus became an important slave market where Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and English merchants did business with each other and with

²¹Biobaku, pp. 14 & 16.

²²Ellis, p. 13.

²³Morton - Williams, JHSN, III, 1, 32 & 40.

the local inhabitants.²⁴

Badagry had another important characteristic. It owed its foundation to Gun, Hueda, and Wemenu refugees who had escaped when Allada and Whydah were, as we have seen, annexed by Dahomey.²⁵ The several immigrant groups moved in different parts of the town, and soon Badagry was divided into eight wards. This fragmentation and disunity prevented the development of a strong centralized political authority. Badagry remained weak, at the whims of its more powerful neighbours like Dahomey and, one who emerges later on the scene, Abeokuta. But this political weakness did not hinder commercial prosperity when the slave trade was at its height. In 1830, however, Richard Lander reported that Badagry had "neither slave-trader nor Englishmen." As the preventive squadron became more effective, Badagry, possessing no harbour facilities to elude the naval patrol, fell out of favour with the slavers.²⁶ Thus, Badagry was poor and stagnating when the Sierra Leone immigrants arrived there in the 1830's and 1840's.

The Porto Novo - Badagry area and its hinterland was traditionally in Oyo's sphere of influence, and remained so until early in the 19th century, in spite of Dahomey's repeated harassment in the attempt to divert the trade of these ports to Whydah. On the eve of Oyo's collapse, then, Dahomey stood poised to subjugate the area, and during the Yoruba wars, after ending its tribute payment to Oyo, Dahomey took advantage of

²⁴ Ajayi, p. 22.

²⁵ Newbury, p. 30.

²⁶ Ajayi, pp. 22-23.

the situation by expanding in the Egbado country, effectively controlling Porto Novo and hindering the Egba at Badagry.²⁷ Further intrusions continued until Dahomey was finally arrested by the Egba at Abeokuta in 1851.²⁸

The early Lagosians, who were Yoruba or Yoruba mixed with an autochthonous stock, were an isolated people engaged in fishing and subsistence farming. It was not till the first decades of the 18th century that internal trade with the Ijebu in the hinterland and also foreign trade commenced.²⁹ With the permanent arrival of slave traders from Brazil towards the end of the 18th century, and the interior struggles that provided the material for export, Lagos was on its rise to commercial significance. But it was not a thriving center for the slave trade before the 1830's.³⁰

The Awori area in the hinterland between Badagry and Lagos also deserve a brief consideration. There were several Awori towns but only the most important ones that figure later are mentioned. Otta formerly a tributary of Oyo strategically placed in a key position on the trade route from Abeokuta to Lagos. Addo (or Ado) was also an important town situated on the east bank of the Yewa river. Formerly a terminal point for the Oyo trade (Ipokia, another terminal point was further south and on the other side of the river), Addo became in the 1840's a key position on the Abeokuta-Badagry route and the center of Egba-Dahomey rivalries. The crucial point is that the Awori were on the trade corridor and commanded access to the coast.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

²⁸ See below p. 81.

²⁹ Kopytoff, pp. 11-14.

³⁰ Newbury, pp. 36-37.

On the 1st of January 1881, the first of the new year, the weather was very cold and the wind was strong from the north.

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While Oyo was able to provide security, the Awori could go on in their semi-independent ways. The end of Oyo suzerainty over the Awori towns, however, encouraged various groups of Egba, Ijebu, Yoruba of Lagos, and the mixed peoples of Badagry to vie with each other and with Dahomey for a share in the trade of the area, seeking among other things arms to defend themselves.

THE EGBA AT ABEOKUTA AFTER 1830

Abeokuta was settled by a heterogeneous population composed of refugees from the many Egba towns and the homeless Owu who had joined them there. The town was divided into about 153 sections with Ake as the "capital". Each of these divisions corresponded to a separate village or hamlet that had existed when the Egba inhabited the Egba Forest further north. At Abeokuta the various sections assumed control of their own local affairs and continued to co-exist, as if they were still separate towns with their own institutions, chiefs, magistrates, and so on.³¹

The problems of developing "national" political institutions were formidable. Because the Egba had in the past lived in their towns more or less independently, they never developed a centralized state like Dahomey or Ashanti. There was no King of the Egba in the sense of a chief executive whose pronouncements and actions were binding on all. The four obas (kings) represented judicial rather than political authority, and, furthermore, had no authority in each other's area. The Alake

³¹Johnson, p. 93.

though "head" of the government was only a figure head.³²

The Ogboni chiefs were the real rulers in the Egba town. The Ogboni House was a council of elders, electoral college, court of appeal, and civic court all in one.³³ Each town Oba was elected by the Ogboni from the nominations submitted by the various competing segments of the same lineage. Thus, representing supreme civil power, the Ogboni had also authority over the war-chiefs. However, the new factor in Egba political life since "independence" was the growth in the power of these Ologun (war-chiefs). This was an extra-constitutional development with no sanction in traditional Egba politics.

Shodeke himself a Seriki (general of the youths) tried to counteract this development by establishing a new federal civil authority -- an all Egba Ogboni -- but the experiment was largely a failure.³⁴ Shodeke also organized the Ologun into a genuine high command, but powerful chiefs continued to act independently in compliance with the old saying "Egbas have no king all of them act like a king."³⁵ Nevertheless, Shodeke was able with his personality and leadership to impose his authority over the various factions, especially over the unruly Ologun. But his death in 1845, as we shall see, led to a reemergence of factional disputes between the Ologun and the Ogboni.

³²The Alake, Oshile, Agura, and Olowu were the four senior chiefs heading the four divisions into which Abeokuta was divided. The Alake was only "primus inter pares." Biobaku, pp. 5-6. Johnson, p. 77.

³³Biobaku, p. 6.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 21-22. Though each section had its own Ogboni, there existed a kind of hierarchy with power in the hands of a dozen or so Ogboni chiefs who bore the highest ranks. Johnson, p. 78.

³⁵Ibid., p. 77; Biobaku, p. 22.

The fragmentation of power and the town affiliation of Abeokuta in part explain why the missionaries and the 'Saro' were able to rise to position of power and influence in Egba society.

One immediate problem dominated the scene at Abeokuta: defence against the traditional enemies, Dahomey, Ibadan, and Ijebu. Egba survival depended, therefore, on an open trade route to the coast for arms and other vital supplies. The strategy adopted was to reduce the towns between Abeokuta and the coast and to maintain the trade route open by containing the Dahomi in the west and the Ijebu in the east. A clash occurred in the Owivi war of 1832 when the Egba with the help of Adele, King of Lagos, defeated an Ibadan - Ijebu coalition. From this period onward, Abeokuta as an emerging power begins to have an important influence in the economic and political life of the coastal kingdoms.³⁶ Finally, the annexation of Otta in 1842 secured the vital and much coveted trade route to Lagos.

³⁶Newbury, p. 36.

4. THE FOUNDATION OF THE YORUBA MISSION: AIMS AND POLICIES

EARLY DAYS AT BADAGRY

The thousands of Egba 'Saro' who had returned to Abeokuta longed for spiritual ministrations. Encouraged by Shodeke's consent, they petitioned both the CMS and the WMS for missionaries.¹ The Wesleyans working from their base in Kumasi were the first to respond and actually beat the Anglicans to Badagry with the arrival there of their pioneer, Thomas Birch Freeman, on September 24, 1842. Freeman proceeded to establish the first Christian mission in Nigeria. Observing, however, that the 'Saro' moved inland to Abeokuta, he decided to travel there and was warmly met by Shodeke on December 11, 1842.² He held talks with Egba leaders, investigated the position of the newly arrived 'Saro', and left determined to bring Abeokuta to the attention of the British government and his Methodist superiors.³ Freeman returned to Badagry, only to find the CMS representative, Henry Townsend, embarking on a similar journey. Townsend was also given a festive welcome on his arrival in Abeokuta in January 4, 1843. This was only an exploratory visit, and he returned to Badagry deeply impressed with the hospitality of the Egba and the potential of Abeokuta as a stepping stone to missions

¹Biobaku, p. 30.

²Ajayi, pp. 31-32.

³Biobaku, p. 29.

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The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute is a peer-reviewed journal of research in human evolution, primatology, and human biology. It is published quarterly by the Royal Anthropological Society. The journal covers a wide range of topics, including the evolution of the human species, the development of the human brain, and the social and cultural evolution of humans. It also includes research on the behavior and biology of non-human primates, and the relationship between human and non-human primates. The journal is a key source of information for researchers in these fields, and is widely cited in the scientific literature.

The journal is published by the Royal Anthropological Society, which is a charitable organization that promotes the study of human evolution and human biology. The society was founded in 1871 and has a long history of publishing research in these fields. The journal is one of the most prestigious journals in the field of human evolution, and is a key source of information for researchers in this field.

The journal is published quarterly, and each volume contains four issues. The journal is available in both print and electronic formats. The print version is published by Taylor & Francis, and the electronic version is available online through the Taylor & Francis website. The journal is also available in a microfilm format.

The journal is a key source of information for researchers in the field of human evolution, and is widely cited in the scientific literature. It is a peer-reviewed journal, and all articles are subject to a rigorous review process. The journal is a key source of information for researchers in the field of human evolution, and is widely cited in the scientific literature.

inland. Andrew Wilhelm stayed in Abeokuta to prepare the ground for a permanent mission.⁴

The first CMS Mission to Nigeria left Freetown in December 1844 and arrived at Badagry in January 1845. Townsend was accompanied by S. Crowther, C. A. Gollmer, and two 'Saro' schoolmasters. Unfortunately, they were not able to continue to their destination as the route to Abeokuta was closed.⁵ The Egba anxious to free their trade route to Badagry had renewed their activities outside the hostile town of Addo. Dahomey came to Addo's rescue but was driven back by an Egba force. In his flight, King Ghezo abandoned his 'umbrella, war charms and stool' to the victorious Egba. Incidentally, the determination to regain these trophies provided Ghezo with a strong motive for his subsequent attacks on Abeokuta.⁶ Meanwhile an Egba force remained outside Addo until 1853, when Townsend convinced the war chiefs to depart.⁷

Other events in Abeokuta caused further complications. Shodeke's death a few days before the arrival of the CMS party created a serious succession crisis. There were two contenders for the disputed title of Balogun (general of the veterans) of the Egba: Ayikundu, Balogun of Igbein, and Apati, the Seriki, who was next in rank to Shodeke. Ayikundu was chosen as Shodeke's successor, but Apati protested so much that Ayikundu offered to relinquish the position. A compromise was reached:

⁴Groves, II, p. 49; Biobaku, p. 31.

⁵Ajayi, p. 34.

⁶Biobaku, p. 31.

⁷See below p. 95.

Ayikundu kept the title and Apati satisfied his pride by purchasing the imperial Oyo title of Bashorun (chancellor or prime minister). This kind of unconstitutional practice showed the pretensions of the powerful war-chiefs, who until now had been kept in check by Shodeke. Realizing the absence of a sovereign Egba leader, Townsend negotiated for safe conduct with the most important Ogboni and Ologun chiefs but was told to wait as the issue was still unresolved early in 1846.⁸

These unexpected difficulties convinced the Society of the need for a coastal base, from which supplies could be received and appeals made to the preventive squadron. The CMS thus proceeded to establish its first base not in Abeokuta as planned but in Badagry. A church was built and a start was made on a Mission House. Townsend attended the mission school, while Crowther and Gollmer proceeded with itinerant preaching, in the town and neighbouring villages.⁹ But Badagry proved to be a difficult station to manage. As we have seen the campaign against the slave trade had ruined Badagry, and unfortunately, too, the hinterland had only little palm-oil, but no ivory, nor gold.¹⁰ Missionaries and 'Saro' were thus welcomed, in the first instance, because of their trade, not their religion.

But trade could not be attracted to the town without political stability, and in the absence of a strong effective rule, the British traders and missionaries turned to the British government for protection. For the moment, however, Britain's interest

⁸ Biobaku, pp. 31-32; Ajayi, p. 38.

⁹ Ajayi, p. 34.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

was focused in the Niger Delta, where African chiefs were being persuaded to sign anti-slave-trade treaties. Freeman made an attempt to incorporate Badagry into Maclean's Gold Coast protectorate, but the venture was abandoned when Britain resumed control over the Gold Coast forts in 1843.¹¹ The real basis of British power remained in British warships who were called in three times by the middle of 1845. By now, too, the Badagry chiefs, tired of missionaries who had brought no trade but only naval threats, decided to expel them.¹²

Meanwhile, Badagry and Abeokuta were drawn in the Lagos succession dispute involving two representatives of the same lineage. In 1841 Akitoye was chosen King of Lagos over his nephew and rival, Kosoko. Though Akitoye had some popular support and was crowned by the Oba of Benin, he was placed on the throne with the help of British traders, who in return hoped Akitoye would open Lagos to them. Kosoko, therefore, appealed to the British traders' rivals -- the Brazilian and Portuguese who resented Akitoye open-door policy -- and with their assistance succeeded in expelling Akitoye in 1845. He took refuge in Abeokuta and from there appealed to the British in Badagry for support.¹³

The British traders, now excluded from Kosoko's Lagos, immediately solicited for naval help. The Egba were also in on this, though they were divided about it. The leading Ogboni

¹¹ Ibid., p. 35; Fage, p. 131.

¹² Ajayi, p. 36.

¹³ J. F. A. Ajayi, "The British Occupation of Lagos," Ibadan, 69 (August, 1961), 96-105; see also the same author's brief comments in his book, Christian Missions, p. 37.

chiefs led by Okukenu, the head of the Egba Ogboni, supported Akitoye and favoured the admission of English missionaries; the leading Ologun favoured Kosoko and by implication the slave trade.¹⁴ This is not to say that Kosoko and Akitoye represented simply a conflict between a slave-trading and an anti-slave-trading party; it is only that the Portuguese and Brazilian were engaged in both trades, and anyone anti-British and soliciting their help was by implication in favour of the slave trade. All this was really another example of European traders exploiting dynastic disputes for their own ends.¹⁵

In March 1846 Akitoye, with the support of Abeokuta, launched an attack on Lagos. The expedition failed but we note that it was financed by a Madeira trader, Domingo Martinez. Martinez figures again later, it is sufficient to state here that he dealt both in slaves and in legitimate goods such as palm-oil. But he was the great rival of the Portuguese and Brazilians who supported Kosoko in Lagos. His support of Akitoye, therefore, destroys the simple view that Akitoye was against slave traders and Kosoko in favour of slave traders.¹⁶ This view persisted, however, and was later exploited by the missionaries for their own political ends.

The Egba reacted to this abortive coup by suddenly allowing Townsend and Crowther, Gollmer remained in Badagry, to proceed to Abeokuta, before resolving their succession dispute. Strange in view of the fact that it was this very problem of

¹⁴Biobaku, p. 33.

¹⁵Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 36.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 38.

finding Shodeke's successor that had kept the CMS party at Badagry. Ajayi's convincing explanation pictures the Egba leaders as calculating African politicians, who allowed missionaries in their country in the hope that these would then use their influence to obtain British naval support for another attempt against Lagos.¹⁷ The die was cast for the missionary-naval-Egba machinations that resulted in the bombardment of Lagos and the ousting of Kosoko in December 1851.

ARRIVAL IN ABEOKUTA: AIMS AND POLICIES

Townsend and Crowther entered Abeokuta on August 3, 1846 and were welcomed at a public meeting where they explained their purpose in setting up a mission. They were granted an official permission to preach and hold property. Land in the Ake section of the Town was given and on this site the first church was built. Townsend settled there and Crowther went on to build his own church, school, and mission house at Igbein.¹⁸ Soon other mission stations were set up in other parts of Abeokuta at Ikija, Itoku, Itoko, and Ago-Owu.¹⁹

The instructions prepared by the Parent Committee for the Yoruba Mission reveal the essential principles which were to guide the missionaries in their activities among the Egba. These broad directives provided the foundation upon which evolved the policies for education, socio-economic change, and an African Church.²⁰ First and foremost, the missionaries were " . . . to introduce among the natives such useful arts and

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 39.

¹⁹ Biobaku, p. 35.

²⁰ Most of this information is derived from the correspondence of the Secretaries to the missionaries in the field.

elementary knowledge calculated to improve social conditions." This social improvement was to be brought about by three complementary means: the Gospel was to provide enlightenment and spiritual benefits; agriculture was to provide necessities and foster industrious habits; and commerce was to lead to fixed habitation, to the creation of property, and the diffusion of conveniences and comforts throughout the community.²¹

Secondly, the Committee, in accordance with its aim of Africanization, outlined its policy for the training of native teachers. It stressed that "the Native Teacher, even though ordained, should not be too highly raised above his countrymen in his habits and mode of living."²² In other words, the religious native teacher was not to be too Europeanized lest he should become too detached from the habits and customs of his own people and thus less accessible as a pastor. Further, there were the alleged "dangers" or self-indulgence and worldly spirit engendered by European comforts. For this reason the salary of native teachers was not to be too high.²³ The "social state" of the people was to advance as Christianity advanced and it was the duty of the "Native Teacher" to be ". . . a little ahead of the civilization of the people around him, and by his example and influence lead that civilization forward."²⁴ This was to be attained slowly and gradually.

The role of missionaries in secular affairs was left vague

²¹Instructions of the Committee of the Church Missionary Society to Revd. Messrs. Gollmer, Townsend and Crowther on occasion of the commencement of Mission at Abeokuta. Delivered on October 22nd, 1844 (CMS CA2/L1). These instructions were signed by the secretaries: Henry Venn, Richard Davies, and Dandeson Coates. Subsequent citations omit CMS.

²²Covering letter from the Secretaries to Gollmer, Townsend and Crowther, October 25th, 1844 (CA2/L1).

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

and ambiguous. They were not to ". . . engage in commerce themselves, nor agriculture, except to a very limited extent" so as "not [to] give undue proportion of their time to matters of a secular nature not indispensable to the working of the Missions." The only activities forbidden were the trade in firearms, gunpowder, and alcohol.²⁵ The question of involvement in politics was not explicitly referred to, but the Society's Standing Regulation stood as a reminder: "Every missionary is strictly charged to abstain from interfering with the political affairs of the country or place in which he may be situated."²⁶ Missionaries were also asked to concentrate their efforts on the already partly detribalized emigrants who were to form the nucleus of Christian congregations. Abeokuta was to be a stepping stone to further exploratory journeys north towards the heart of Africa. Finally, the importance of translating the scriptures and proselytising in the vernacular was stressed.²⁷

Uppermost in Venn's mind was his attempt to get "legitimate commerce" to contribute to the economic development, social improvement, and civilization of the Egba people. The trouble was the coastal palm-oil trade based on the trust system. Private merchants seeking quick returns and large profits on small consignments tended to stay on the coast and provide capital to the chiefs who then exploited the labour of domestic slaves to bring palm-oil from the interior.²⁸ As a result the system of subsistence economy based on the exploitation of labour and the selling of surplus manpower in slavery was perpetuated.

Venn's great remedy was to get the hitherto surplus labour

²⁵ Ibid., see also Venn to the Brethren, February 24th, 1852 (CA2/L1).

²⁶ Cited in Venn to Gollmer, June 30th, 1854 (CA2/L1).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ H. Venn, West African Colonies (London: 1865), p. 33. See also J. F. A. Ajayi, "Henry Venn and the policy of Development," JHSN, I, 4 (December, 1959), 336.

engaged in developing the great commercial and agricultural resources of Africa. Trained African agents dispatched to the interior were to introduce the profit motive in Egba commercial life by encouraging peasant family production directly for export markets.²⁹ Special stations were to be located in various places where the individual African farmer would bring his collection of cotton, indigo, arrow-root, etc. No credit was to be extended and the individual farmer was to be paid upon consignment only. All this was to be done so as to foster and encourage the growth of a new class of traders and producers who were to lead the reformation of Egba society.

Actually Venn's plan failed. Not only did the missionaries become mercantile speculators, but also by about the year 1856 circumstances forced a reversal to the trust system. This created all sorts of problems -- and these are the themes played up later -- in a mission that was not supposed, and clearly not organized, to be directly involved in the commercial affairs of Abeokuta. The function of missionaries was only to pioneer a cotton industry and to introduce agricultural techniques. The commercial affairs of Abeokuta were to be handed to the new middle class, and it was for this reason that the 'Saro' traders were encouraged to follow missionaries at Badagry, Lagos and Abeokuta.

The Society conceived a partnership essentially between the missionaries and the newly educated middle class. The missionaries in the field with the support of merchants and the British government would initiate the "revolution", and the liberated Africans would be instrumental in carrying it through and bringing about a new social, economic, and political order. A powerful nation based on Christianity, commerce, European civilization (in the technological sense) and modelled on European states was probably the ultimate aim, although this was

²⁹Venn, John Clapham and H. Straith (Secretaries of the CMS) to Irving, December 23rd, 1853. (CA2/L1).

never explicitly formulated.

Again as with the other aspects of missionary policy, the following pages will reveal the extent to which these goals were frustrated by unforeseen circumstances. In particular, we shall see the remarkable co-operation between missionaries, traders, and consuls over the establishment of British paramountcy at Lagos give way to opposition between British interests in Lagos and missionary interests in Abeokuta. The missionaries succeeded in building the defence of Abeokuta against Dahomey, and were largely responsible for maintaining the Egba as an independent enclave when the surrounding areas to the south were absorbed into the Lagos Protectorate. Christianity and commerce did also make an impact on Egba society. But all this fell far short from the social and economic revolution envisaged by Venn when he formulated the above mentioned directives. Again for most of the time, particularly from about the end of the 1850's, missionaries and educated Africans were not partners but rivals. In the end, the competition resulted in the educated Africans acquiring power in the Egba government, and then using this power to expel the missionaries.

It is interesting to note also how the Society's educational policy was designed to support its commercial and political objectives. The educational objectives Abeokuta missionaries were to aim for were most unequivocally stated by Venn in 1852. He advised Rev. Townsend thus: "All Sierra Leone notions must be banished from your minds. We are not to educate a few young gentlemen, but to make a model self-supporting Educational Institution by combining industrial labour [with book learning]. The Native Teachers living as Natives But we are convinced that Islington and Fourah Bay are as far as possible from

the right course for Abeokuta." ³⁰ Clearly Venn convinced that an idle intelligentsia was not the solution to Abeokuta's needs tried to direct the Society away from the Fourah Bay tradition of a literary education. He was almost fanatical about the benefits that could ensue from cotton cultivation. "Cotton," he wrote, "must be to Africa its gold diggings. It may be cultivated with little labour, picked and cleaned by the school children and when weighed and packed becomes ready money, . . . Manchester will always pay for any quantity on hand in Africa." ³¹ The Society, therefore, advocated a self-supporting apprenticeship trade school, modelled on the educational institutions of the Basle missionaries, that would train a class of artisans, traders, and peasant producers.

This new class of people with their technical skills would lead the social advancement of the Egba. Thus the Society's "consular" agent ³² was urged to guide ". . . the Sierra Leone people especially, as British subjects, and the Christians of Abeokuta, so that the parties may rise in social position and influence while they are receiving Christian instruction and thus form themselves in a self-supporting Christian Church and give practical proof that godliness hath promise of the life that now is as well as that which is to come." ³³ The missionaries were not to christianize and educate people en masse but to gather together away from the rest of the population a flock of people already partly "civilized" and to work with them.

³⁰ Venn and Straith to Townsend, December 2nd, 1852 (CA2/LI)

³¹ Ibid.

³² See below, p. 98.

³³ Venn, Clapham and Straith to Irving, December 23rd, 1853 (CA2/L1).

It would seem that the Society, by attempting to foster a new class of Africans at once both "developed" and "unspoiled",³⁴ was pursuing contradictory objectives. For example, the Christian middle class was to have the dual function of leading the reformation of Egba Society and of acting as a labour force for the cotton industry of Britain. Although directives generally suggest the need for such diverse people as mission teachers, itinerant evangelists, artisans and peasant producers, in effect the Mission needed not one but two classes: one to provide leadership, the other to provide labour. But the Society wished to construct a flexible system enabling those unsuitable for spiritual and intellectual work to be transferred to more menial and less demanding tasks.³⁵ It was necessary for every African, in whatever capacity he was trained, to remain close to African roots in order to be able to communicate with the masses. Townsend was instructed not to have native teachers too far removed from native habits lest they "become inefficient as Native labourers."³⁶ In this way Venn hoped to counteract the tendency of missionaries in the field to keep natives in "leading strings" for too long. By becoming dependent and European in their tastes, these were "spoiled" and made unfit to be either leaders or labourers.³⁷

³⁴ I take developed to involve spoiling in Ajayi's sense, J. F. A. Ajayi, "Henry Venn and the Policy of Development," JHSN I, 4, 331.

³⁵ Venn, Graham and Straith to Townsend, September 22nd, 1854, (CA2/LI).

³⁶ Ibid., "Labourers" such as catechists and itinerant evangelists.

³⁷ Venn to Irving, December 20th, 1854, (CA2/LI).

Venn's policy may thus be viewed as an attempt to prepare Africans for great responsibilities without throwing them out of step with their own customs and habits. He apparently believed that each race had its own peculiar talents and abilities and that education ought to develop these innate qualities.³⁸ The aim was, therefore, not to "spoil" the African but on the contrary to train him to stand on his own two feet. From these ideas seemed to have evolved the policies for an education adapted to African needs and an African Church adapted to African customs and institutions.

It must be stressed that Venn's ideas changed as his estimation of Africans increased. The earlier statements smugly asserting European cultural superiority³⁹ vanished, and by 1868 we read of a more moderate Venn recommending his missionaries that they respect cultural and racial differences and make use of existing national habits and institutions, such as headmen and chiefs.⁴⁰ The Society's "consular" agent was to advise and strengthen the chiefs but he was not to supersede them.⁴¹ At the same time he was to foster a "class" that would rival the power and influence of the traditional authorities. The incongruity remained, for the educated classes were clearly to rival the power and influence of the chiefs but not to supersede them. It was of course naive not to expect a rising class to sooner or later

³⁸Hollis R. Lynch, "The Native Pastorate Controversy Cultural Ethno-Centrism in Sierra Leone 1871-1874," JAH, V, 3 (1964), 402.

³⁹Venn to the missionaries at Abeokuta, September 9th, 1851 (CA2/LI).

⁴⁰"On Nationality", June, 1868. Memoirs of the Rev. Henry Venn, ed. by William Knight (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1880) p. 252.

⁴¹Venn to Irving, March 29th, 1853 (CA2/L1).

attempt to grasp political power. But the missionaries were not faced with this problem of restraining natural political ambition till the late 1850's, when the educated Africans began to compete not only with the traditional rulers but unexpectedly with their own missionaries.

Venn, as we shall see, failed in his principal goal to steer the mission schools of Lagos and Abeokuta away from the Fourah Bay literary tradition. It was the Lagos Grammar School founded by T. B. Macaulay -- one of the 'Saro' that passed through Venn's own hands -- that became more popular than its parent the industrial Abeokuta Training Institution and had a greater long term influence in moulding the first generation of the Nigerian elite.

Venn, however, went beyond mission schools to put his ideas into practice. He privately assisted with the training of many Africans and of all the ones that passed through his hands only one -- T. B. Macaulay -- read Arts. Samuel Crowther, Jr., was sent to Britain for medical training. Two youths -- Henry Robbin and Josiah Crowther⁴² -- were sent to Manchester for training in cleaning and packing cotton; two others learnt tile and brick-making and building also at Manchester. Another two were sent to Kew Gardnes to study Botany, and another learnt printing, also in Britain. Several were trained as navigators and naval surgeons for the merchant marine.⁴³

The coherence of CMS policy is further demonstrated by the inter connection between the above mentioned aims and its

⁴²See below p. 116.

⁴³Ajayi, JHSN, I, 4, 339; Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 145.

policy for the development of an African Church. Trade and commerce created the property for a self-supporting (indigenous) African Church; education provided the leadership. Venn drew up four important papers which were subsequently issued by the general committee of the CMS as Instructions to the Missionaries. Three papers entitled "On the Organization of Native Churches" were issued in 1851, in July 1861 and January 1866. The fourth paper entitled "On Nationality" was issued in June 1868.⁴⁴ From these papers we can see how Venn's policy for an African Christian Church developed.

First, the missionaries supported by foreign funds were to gather together converts in Christian companies under indigenous leaders. During part of this stage, the members were to be encouraged to assume the financial burden of their churches, and a Native Church Fund was to be established for that purpose. Eventually the companies were to combine into congregations that were to receive diminishing annual grants until they became completely self-supporting. At the same time African catechists were to be trained to take care of these churches; when these had acquired sufficient experience they were to be ordained, and the various congregations united under a native pastorate. The European missionaries were then to relinquish administrative control but retain their guidance and influence from without, as they moved to other areas to repeat the process.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Memoirs, pp. 282-335.

⁴⁵ The essential distinction is between pastoral work (caring for converted souls) and evangelical work. The Society's energy and funds if used in pastoral activities (the concern of the native agency) would only interfere with its evangelical work.

The evolution in Venn's ideas must be stressed. In the first paper of 1851 Venn recommended that the native pastorate should remain for some indefinite time under missionary supervision and then pass under the control of the ecclesiastical system. However, in his second paper of 1861, he explicitly recommended that the native churches organize themselves under their own pastorate and remain independent of missionary influence. The native pastorate was to culminate in a native episcopate, and it seems that the ultimate objective was an African Church transcending all interdenominational factions, gradually emancipating itself from all foreign (i. e. missionary) supervision and becoming "self supporting, self governing and self extending."⁴⁶

Yet again it must not be thought that this policy was ever implemented. Venn's enthusiasm for African leadership in the Church was not generally shared by the European missionaries on the spot. Townsend led the opposition and resisted every attempt at ordaining or otherwise promoting native teachers. As a consequence, by the end of our period the African Church in Yoruba had only progressed to Venn's first stage of setting up church funds for the payment of native pastors. The roots and effects of missionary opposition to its own educated Africans are discussed in more detail below.

⁴⁶ibid.

5. THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON BRITISH
ACTIVITIES IN THE BIGHT OF BENIN
THE FIRST YEARS AT ABEOKUTA

The early years at Abeokuta witnessed the rise of Christian settlements -- Alabama or Wasimi -- around the many Anglican mission stations and around the Methodist station at Ogbe.¹ Biobaku writes that it was a period of excitement and joyful imitation of strange European customs. Sons of leading chiefs adopted European surnames and Ogubonna, the chief of Ikiya, added doors and windows to his house in imitation of the white man's dwelling.² But as might be expected, the initial exuberance and excitement was soon followed by discontent.³ The war-chiefs, anxious to continue their traditional practices of slave hunting for exports, naturally resisted the anti-slave-trade teachings of the white man. An Egba slave raid upon Abaka in Okeagan in 1846 can be explained as the action of the slave trade party who wished to carry on business with the Brazilians⁴ at Badagry. The fact that such activities were continued in violation of official Egba policy to embrace legitimate trade demonstrates once again the constitutional weakness of the Egba government.

Dissension from other quarters gravitated around the

¹Biobaku, p. 34. A Fanti unordained schoolmaster, Morgue, arrived at Abeokuta in 1847 to occupy the Ogbe station. In 1849 he was relieved by Edward Bickersteth, an Egba 'Saro', who remained sole Methodist representative till 1859. Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 39.

²Ibid.

³Townsend informed Venn that the government of Abeokuta was against the spread of Christianity because it upset their customs. Briefly, they wanted missionaries without their religion. Townsend to Venn, November 14th, 1850, (CA2/M2).

⁴These traders consisted of Portuguese speaking Brazilians and Portuguese, creoles, and ex-Brazilian slaves of Fon and Yoruba origins.

core opposition of the slave traders. The Evangelical missionaries worked on the principle that conversion was a private emotional experience between the soul and its Maker. Consequently, prior to admission to the fold, the candidate was obliged to undergo a "change of heart", a spiritual rebirth, accompanied by evidence of having abandoned such practices as polygamy and human sacrifice.⁵ Naturally age-old customs could not be abandoned without resulting in a general unsettling effect, which was further aggravated by the cleavages brought about by the natural tendency of Christian converts to separate from the rest of the community.⁶ A latent opposition that could erupt in a period of stress was formed. As an illustration, the first persecution of Christian converts in 1848-9 resulted from the more immediate cause of the burial of the first deceased native Christian. Christian funeral rites deprived the Ogboni of their traditional burial fees and the Babalawo (heathen priests) of their accustomed practices. Persecutions erupted in a few townships but did not become general because of the disapproval of Okukenu, the chief of Ake, and the leading Ologun.⁷ Thus, with the support of the most powerful

⁵R. Oliver, The Missionary Factor in East Africa (London: Longmans, 1962), pp. 22-24. In contrast to the Evangelical method, the Catholics accepted the faithful into the visible Church and provided him with the material incentives of "institutional good works." Change of morals to follow later would depend largely on favourable circumstances. The Calvinists as exemplified by the Basel practices at Accra also gave first priority to creating the appropriate social atmosphere that would hasten the growth of the Christian character. But the Anglican missionaries seemed to have carried the attempt to eradicate 'native' practices a little too far. Even the practice of exchanging present, which could be regarded both as a token of friendship and a form of extortion, was regarded by Townsend as a pernicious practice that had to be abandoned. Townsend to Venn, August 18th, 1846 (CA2/ml).

⁶Townsend pointed out that the Mission at Abeokuta did not encourage the formation of a 'Christian village'; it emerged as a result of one or two converts acquiring land and the rest gravitating around them. Cf., James S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958), pp. 100-101. Townsend to Venn, November 26th, 1857 (CA2/M3).

⁷Biobaku, pp. 35 and 41. Townsend, (P.P., 1852, LIV (221),

chiefs the missions were able to survive and flourish.

The fragmentation of political authority in Abeokuta worked ultimately to the advantage of the missionaries who were able to exploit it and emerge in a position of influence and prestige. Townsend the leading CMS representative became the confidant of the chiefs, and the go-between in many diplomatic missions.⁸ More important, Townsend had realised from his Badagry days that the survival of the Yoruba Mission depended on British protection in the form of consuls and an active preventive squadron. But since Abeokuta was to become the center of missionary influence in Yorubaland, ultimately the success of Christianity in the area depended on the commercial development and political survival of Abeokuta. The Society naturally turned to the British government, since it regarded the spreading of Christianity, commerce, and civilization as the common task of Church and State.

Townsend to Captain H. D. Trotter, December 10th 1851, p. 88.), explained that "the Government here is exceedingly weak; it is just as if all the German principalities and little kingdoms were brought together in one town, each bringing their separate institutions and governments, and acting but seldom in unison." It was thus possible to have a persecution in one end of town and not in another.

⁸Oliver, pp. 70-71. Dr. Oliver stresses the many ways a missionary could increase his prestige and influence. To African eyes, a missionary could perform a variety of 'miracles' ranging from the ability to make water effervesce, to the prediction of eclipses, and the performance of a medical operation. He could, thus, outdo the cleverest of witch doctors. As a representative of a European power and with his distinguished 'book' knowledge, he was sought after for consultation and many succession disputes were brought to him for arbitration.

At Abeokuta the more immediate objective was the introduction of legitimate commerce, in accordance with Venn's policy. The Egba now a nation of traders and producers needed an export outlet and so did the missionaries for their supplies. Lagos was turned to as the natural outlet for the trade coming from Abeokuta via the Ogun River.

MISSIONARY INTERPRETATION OF EVENTS

An examination of missionary correspondence suggests that it probably played a large part in convincing opinion in Britain that the abovementioned objectives could only be attained by imposing some kind of British control over Lagos. The missionaries went on to publicise Lagos as a notorious slave depot and Kosoko as the usurper and incorrigible arch slave-trader. Badagry was in a similar way depicted as a den of lawlessness and slave-trading activities. Akitoye, on the other hand, was built up as the peaceful, pro-British, anti-slaving and legitimate ruler of Lagos.⁹ This kind of picture depicted the struggle between two rival branches of the ruling dynasty of Lagos, with each side seeking allies among the Europeans on the coast, in terms of confrontation of two forces: those who wanted to carry on with the slave trade were evil and anti-British, and those who were willing to participate in lawful trade were pro-British and had divine blessing.

The missionaries were probably sincere in their belief that the kind of society they hoped to build, and the kind of values they desired to inculcate in their Christian converts, would not flourish as long as the slave trade and its accompanied cruelty and degradation continued. Yet missionaries were also

⁹The evidence is scattered but the following are the most useful: Townsend to Lay Secretary; April 14th, 1845, June 4th, 1845 and June 27th, 1845. Gollmer to Henry Venn, January 8th, 1846 (CA2/MI).

politicians, perfectly aware that a situation presented in terms of a fight for an uncompromising principle would be more likely to arouse public sympathy and support, and hopefully action by the British government. But it was fiction to assert that legitimate commerce and slave trade could not co-exist, and that the former would only survive by suppressing the latter. Activities at Whydah, Badagry, and Lagos gave no ground for this article of faith.

The situation in the Bight of Benin can be grasped by following the career of the slave trader, Domingo Martinez.¹⁰ Martinez was active at Lagos from 1838 to 1844 during Akitoye's ascendancy and was reputed to have amassed a considerable fortune. He decided to retire to Brazil but, unable to fit into the Brazilian society of the period, he returned to the Bight in 1846 and established himself at Porto Novo.¹¹

During Martinez's earlier career at Lagos, the pattern of trade was to purchase slaves from Africa in exchange for gold, rum, and tobacco from Bahia in Brazil.¹² By 1841-1842 two new factors had changed the trading pattern in the eastern part of the Bight of Benin. First, the armed boats of the preventive squadron cruising around made it more difficult to unload goods such as rum, tobacco, knives, cotton, and specie in exchange for a load of slaves, and it became more practical to make the transaction in "dollars and doubloons." Hence the de-

¹⁰This is based on an article by David A. Ross, "The Career of Domingo Martinez in the Bight of Benin," JAH, XI, I (1965), 79-90.

¹¹Ibid., p. 80.

¹²Ross, JAH, XI, 1, 80.

mand for coins increased.¹³ Secondly, new conditions were created at Whydah by the entry of European palm-oil traders. In 1838, Thomas Hutton opened a palm-oil factory at Whydah and was followed in 1841 by the French firm of Regis. This expansion took place in opposition to the Brazilians. By 1846 the coastal lagoons from the Gold Coast to Badagry were opened to French and British palm-oil traders.¹⁴

The Brazilians at first refused to deal in palm-oil but soon appreciated their advantageous position as 'middle-men', which they possessed by virtue of the long term credit they obtained from European supercargoes. They soon began to purchase both palm-oil and slaves from Africans and sold them as the demand required.¹⁵ Newbury stresses that the impetus which caused the slavers to engage in the palm-oil business was the change in African tastes.¹⁶ By the end of the 1840's, the African demand for Manchester and Birmingham goods such as cotton, arms, and powder increased at the same time as the British demand for palm-oil. The slavers were therefore obliged to tap the palm-oil resources in order to purchase these sought after European goods.¹⁷ Generally, then, the Brazilians were able to supply both Bahia and British goods. Martinez, for example, traded in slaves as well as on the palm-oil account with the firm of Forster and Smith.¹⁸

¹³Newbury, p. 40.

¹⁴Ross, JAH, XI, 1, 80-81.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Also by the fact that shipments of cheap tobacco and rum from Brazil were running short. Newbury, p. 42.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 38.

Thus in the period 1846 to 1851 palm-oil prospered and prices rose.¹⁹ At the same time the trade in slaves did not come to an end, and a study of the documents of Dos Santos,²⁰ a small slave trader, suggests that the export of slaves in fact increased. The Bight slave trade as a whole, however, estimated at 62,000 in 1846, declined to about one-third of this number during the next four years, and after 1851 fell to less than 3,000 a year.²¹

It is important to recall the real cause of this decline. Commodore Fanshawe in 1850 reported that the activities of the squadron had not caused any real fall in the profits of the slavers, and therefore had not really checked the trade.²² Yet a year later the same officer was able to report a very considerable drop in the trade. This was caused not by the increase in legitimate trade but by the increase in the number of vessels on duty in the Bight and the Brazilians' prohibition of the slave trade to their own country.²³ Contrary to missionary propaganda, therefore, slave and legitimate trades seem to have been complementary. Incidentally, the most important factor in finally ending the trans-Atlantic slave trade was the use of captives as domestic slaves in the new cash crop industry.

¹⁹The price of palm-oil rose from three dollars to seven dollars per 18 gallons measure. Ross, JAH, XI, 1, 81. Citing Commander Forbes to Commodore Fanshawe, 6 April 1850.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹C. P. Lloyd, The Navy and the Slave Trade (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1949) pp. 140-46.

²²F. O. 84/826, Commodore Fanshawe to Secretary of the Admiralty, April 10th, 1850. Cited in Ross, JAH., XI, 1, 81.

²³Ibid., 84. Citing F. O. 84/865, Commodore Fanshawe to Secretary of the Admiralty, 29th April 1851. See also Lloyd, c. III.

West of Lagos, competition between Brazilian and European merchants became intense, but it seems that with the exception of the French firm of Regis, European palm-oil dealers made little progress till the end of the 1840's. All together legitimate traders²⁴ numbered about half a dozen before the capture of Lagos. They introduced a new pattern of trading directly with Africans thus cutting out the Brazilians as middlemen. The Brazilians at Whydah, in turn, reacted by raising palm-oil prices and by flooding the market with good quality low priced European goods. Obviously they could afford to do this since they were compensated by the high profits from the slave trade.

But there was also much intra-competition. Hutton, unable to maintain a monopoly at Badagry, looked to a Lagos free of rivals. Similarly, Martinez, unable to break Da Souza's monopoly at Whydah, wished to regain his former position at Lagos. Nevertheless, Martinez's volume of trade at Whydah and Porto Novo -- \$80,000 in palm-oil in 1849²⁵ and \$200,000 in 1850 -- completely invalidated the missionary thesis on the relationship between the two trades.²⁶

The Egba, as already noted, had the objective of extend-

²⁴ The agents of Victor Regis at Whydah; the agents of Thomas Hutton & Co. at Anecho, Whydah and Badagry; J. Sandeman acting for the firm of 'Forster & Smith' established a factory at Badagry in 1851; two other firms are mentioned but it is not clear where they were established. Newbury, p. 42; Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 59.

²⁵ Ross, JAH, XI, 1, 82, citing F. O. 84/816, Beecroft to Palmerston, Journal of visit to Abomey, 6 July, 1850.

²⁶ Ibid., F. O. 84/866, Fraser to Beecroft, Journal of stay in Whydah, December, 1850.

ing their sphere of influence to the coast in order to control the important inland waterway via the Ogun as well as other trade routes. This policy was in harmony with the aims of the Yoruba Mission, and the missionaries with their pro-Egba account of events were enthusiastically interpreting the Egba people to the British government and public at large.

In 1848 Townsend left on furlough for Britain and took with him a message from Okukenu and the chiefs to Queen Victoria. This letter, drafted by Townsend, expressed gratitude for English friendship and hatred for the slave trade, invited traders and teachers; and formally asked protection to navigate the Lagos Lagoon.²⁷

The Brazilian traders at Lagos were the great obstacle: they forced the Egba to use the unsatisfactory Abeokuta-Badagry land route and denied the missionaries a station at Lagos. Kosoko, however, had good reasons for keeping (a) the Ogun river closed and (b) British traders out of Lagos. He owed his throne to the support of the 'Brazilians', and thus could not very well associate himself with the pro-British interests of his dynastic rival without jeopardizing his position. The policy of denying entrance to British merchants was based, according to Ajayi, on the theory that the Consul could then not intervene on the pretext of protecting British subjects and their property.²⁸

²⁷Biobaku, pp. 35-36.

²⁸Ajayi, Ibadan, 69 (August, 1961), 102.

While in England Townsend gave evidence before the Hutt Committee²⁹ on July 4th, 1848. Townsend spoke of the improvements at Abeokuta due to the decline in the slave trade and the rise of missionary influence, of the work of the preventive squadron to this end, and of the necessity of retaining the squadron in order to prevent a revival of the slave trade in West Africa.³⁰ Townsend's report on Abeokuta, Dahomey's demand for a consul at Whydah,³¹ and the recommendations of the Wilberforce Committee³² encouraged Lord Palmerston to act.

CONSUL BEECROFT AND ANTI-SLAVE - TRADE TREATIES

On June 20th, 1849 John Beecroft was appointed Consul in the Bights of Benin and Biafra (an area including Dahomey). His instructions were to prevent quarrels between Africans and Europeans, to encourage natives to produce goods to be exchanged for European commodities, and to report on the best means of establishing commercial intercourse with the chiefs of the coast and the interior. Of utmost urgency he was to convince African chiefs of the great advantage to be derived from lawful commerce with Europe.³³ Essentially, then, Beecroft was to persuade if

²⁹This House of Commons Committee was established in 1847-48 to investigate the best method of extinguishing the slave trade. Anti-coercionist partisans gained control of the Committee and finally pronounced against the retention of the squadron and in favour of the more peaceful and diplomatic approach.

³⁰Biobaku, p. 36; Ajayi, Christian Missions, pp. 61-62.

³¹P. P., 1852, LIV (221), Ghezo to Queen Victoria, November 3rd, 1848, Encl. 2 in No. 3, pp. 5-6. This was the reaction to Brodie Cruickshank's attempt in 1848 to sign an anti-slave treaty with Dahomey. Ghezo stressed that a British consul would be welcomed at Whydah but slave hunting would not stop.

³²This Select Committee was set up by the House of Lords under Bishop Wilberforce in opposition to the Commons' Hutt Committee. Their report of 1849 recommended the retention and strengthening of the squadron.

³³P.P., 1852, LIV (221), Palmerston to Beecroft, June 30th, 1849, p. 1.

possible, coerce if necessary, African potentates to accept that the total renunciation of the slave trade for palm-oil and cotton would provide greater revenues. This thesis, it seems, was unacceptable to King Ghezo, the war-chiefs at Abeokuta, the majority of the Badagry Gun chiefs and the Brazilian traders at Lagos.³⁴

It was rejected for sound economic and political reasons. The King of Dahomey appears to have been a monarch who clearly realized that his country's economic prosperity depended on good trading relations with European powers. However, his people were accustomed to slave hunting, not farming. Even if the Dahomi were taught the arts of farming, the long term benefits would not compensate for the regular revenue in the form of customs and duties derived from Whydah. This revenue was needed to sustain Ghezo's army and government with its pomp, ceremony, and honoured traditions. In short, a change in the method of production could not be brought about without undermining Ghezo's position, and possibly even precipitating anarchy.³⁵ Moreover, Dahomi survival depended on the constant supply of arms and powder which were bought with the income from the slave trade. Palmerston based Beecroft's instructions on his belief that Ghezo was a despot who had absolute control over the commercial activities of his subjects. It was only necessary to induce him to change his commercial policy.³⁶

³⁴Newbury, p. 50.

³⁵These observations were made by B. Cruickshank, Chief Magistrate at Cape Coast, in 1848. Cruickshank, Report, November 9th, 1848, in the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter, iv, No. XIV (new series, 1849), pp. 125-26. Cited by Newbury, p. 51.

³⁶Robert Gauin, "Nigeria and Lord Palmerston," Ibadan, 69 (June, 1961), pp. 26-27.

CMS PRESSURES ON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

While Townsend was on his visit to England, he was asked to draw up a paper on the Yoruba situation to be used as a basis for a deputation to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston. Townsend produced an important document dwelling on the missionary success at Abeokuta, on the dangers and intrigues of the slave traders against British missionaries and subjects, on the threat of Kosoko in Lagos and Ghezo in Abomey, on the possibilities for the commercial development of Yorubaland, on the friendliness of the Abeokuta chiefs, and on the support of the Egba 'Saro'. In short, the paper aimed at convincing the British government that Abeokuta ought to receive its prompt support as the symbol of the advance in Africa of civilization and Christianity.³⁷ This paper formed the foundation for a CMS memorandum outlining a policy for Yorubaland. The memorandum argued that the establishment of commercial relations with the interior of Africa would contribute to the suppression of the slave trade. This was to be achieved by opening the Abeokuta-Rabbah road to the coast (via the Ogun) to the traders from the banks of the Niger. In this way the failures of the 1841 Niger Expedition were to be vindicated.³⁸

Meanwhile the CMS had organized a group led by Henry Venn to apply pressures on the government. On December 4th, 1849, a deputation led by Venn presented both the Townsend paper and the CMS memorandum to Lord Palmerston. More directly, Palmerston was informed of the importance of securing an opening

³⁷Townsend to Secretary of the CMS, October 17th, 1849, P.P., 1852, LIV (221) Inclos. 1 in No. 4, p. 30. See also Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 66.

³⁸Townsend to Secretary of the CMS, October 17th, 1849, Ibid.; see also Palmerston to Beecroft, February 25th, 1850, "Instructions relative to his mission to Abeokute," Ibid., p. 29.

for legitimate commerce by establishing a British Resident at Abeokuta, an armed boat on the Lagoon, and a fort at Badagry.³⁹

Hutton's attendance at the above meeting is significant. Unable to compete with Régis at Whydah and to maintain a monopoly of trade at Badagry, he, like the CMS was looking for an opening in Lagos. Hutton's arguments to the Foreign Office were later followed by a letter circulated to Palmerston.⁴⁰ In this letter Thomas Hutton explained that the King of Dahomey would only agree to an anti-slave-trade treaty, if lesser mortals such as Kosoko were persuaded first. He suggested that the British government concentrate on obtaining Lagos by force or treaty, and thus give an immediate blow to the Abeokuta and Benin slave trade.

CMS pressure persisted and another delegation to Lord Grey, Colonial Secretary, urged the establishment of armed forts on the Lagoon.⁴¹ These delegations and Hutton's arguments "deflected Palmerston's attention away from Dahomey to the problem of keeping open the communications with Abeokuta."⁴² It can be seen, therefore, that by mid-1850 certain missionary and merchant interests were applying strong pressures on the British government to intervene at Lagos.

³⁹Venn, Memoirs, p. 109. Venn, Sirs R. H. Inglis, E. Buxton, and T. Acland, Hutton, Townsend, Gollmer, Major Straith (CMS Lay Secretary), and Lord Waldegrave were present at this meeting.

⁴⁰P.P., 1852, LIV (221) Thomas Hutton to William Hutton, 7 August 1850, Encl. 8 in No. 4, p. 39.

⁴¹Present at this meeting on December 5th, 1849, were again Sirs R.H. Inglis and E. Buxton, Hutton, and Gollmer. Venn, Memoirs, p. 111.

⁴²Newbury, p. 52.

Townsend returned to Abeokuta assured in the knowledge that his arguments on behalf of the Egba were under consideration. He had represented the Egba in rosy terms, as the centre of hope from whence legitimate commerce and civilization would radiate to the interior of West Africa. He brought with him gifts from the Queen and the Prince Consort, along with a very sympathetic reply to Okukenu's message to the Queen.⁴³

Beecroft's first missions were to convince Ghezo to sign an anti-slave-trade treaty and then proceed to Abeokuta in order to investigate missionary accusations and Egba disposition. These assignments, following shortly after the deputations of December 1849, indicate that the Foreign Secretary was impressed with the arguments presented by Venn, Townsend, and Hutton.⁴⁴

DAHOMY, LAGOS, AND ABEOKUTA

Beecroft arrived in Abomey on May 26th, 1850, but was unable to persuade Ghezo to sign a treaty for the abolition of the slave trade, even with a subsidy as compensation.⁴⁵

⁴³The Queen commanded the Earl of Chichester, President of the CMS, to inform Okukenu and the chiefs that she was very pleased that the Egba had preferred lawful trade to the slave trade and had welcomed Christian missionaries. The message was accompanied by two Bibles in Arabic and English from the Queen and a steel cornmill from the Prince Consort. Biobaku, p. 37.

⁴⁴"Instructions relative to his mission to Abomey", P.P., 1852, LIV (221) Palmerston to Beecroft, January 23rd, 1850, p. 3. "Instructions relative to his mission to Abeokuta", Palmerston to Beecroft, February 25th, 1850, Ibid., p. 29. The instructions for Abeokuta explicitly referred to the CMS recommendations.

⁴⁵The subsidy authorized was £3,000 p.a. for three years but Beecroft extended it to five years subject to Palmerston's ratification. P.P., 1852, LIV (221) Palmerston to Beecroft, February 25th, 1850, p. 29; Ibid., Beecroft to Palmerston, July 22nd, 1850, pp. 40-43. This subsidy could not compensate for a trade that was estimated to bring £60,000 p.a.

Ghezo argued quite logically that an end to the slave trade would spell his economic ruin. He repeated an earlier request that the trade be stopped first at lesser ports by imposing a blockade of all the ports between Quittah and Lagos.⁴⁶ There were definite reasons behind this request. Dispersal of slave shipments to the eastern creeks had caused a diminution in Dahomey's revenue. Blockade of his enemies' ports was also good strategy.

Beecroft reported his failure and advocated strong measures that can be explained only by his desire of extending to the Bight of Benin the policy of active interference and encroachment that he had pursued in the "Oil Rivers" in the 1830's and 1840's. His strategy was to curb the power of Ghezo and Kosoko by blockading the Whydah-Lagos area, and placing Akitoye in power again. Actions at Lagos and Whydah were to be complementary with the immediate objective of delivering Abeokuta from the Dahomi threat.⁴⁷

First hand observers such as Freeman appreciated Ghezo's position and understood the root of his hostility and suspicion. Freeman had visited Abomey in March, 1843 and had reported that Ghezo was jealous of Abeokuta's growing power, and naturally suspicious of missionary activities there and at Badagry.⁴⁸ Freeman's earlier visit to Abeokuta and his "erection of a British fort"⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ T. B. Freeman, Journal of Various Visits ... (1844), II, 239 ff., for 3 January and 12-14 March, 1843, cited in Ellingworth, JAH, V, 2, 214.

⁴⁹ As reported by Ghezo's spies, ibid.

had immediately aroused Ghezo's suspicions. Ghezo, not fully grasping the distinction between the secular and religious aspects of British influence, saw the missionaries as British power intervening on the side of Abeokuta.⁵⁰ This in fact was the consequence of missionary intervention at Abeokuta, although not the original intention of missionary policy. Fearful that the Egba might gain an advantage by missionary support, Ghezo and his yevogan (Minister for European Affairs) asked: "Can you not do something for Whydah also?"⁵¹ Even Beecroft, whose tactic was to discredit Ghezo in the eyes of the Foreign Office, reported that Ghezo became very excited and jealous when the subject of Abeokuta was mentioned. Beecroft was finally asked "what right have the white men to go and teach those fellows book palaver."⁵²

But Palmerston needed little urging. He was already influenced by CMS representations that took an unqualified anti-Dahomi position, thereby obscuring the difficulties such a nation had in adjusting to Britain's commercial demands. The image of a law abiding peaceful Egba nation falling victim to Ghezo's rapacious cruelty was bound to have an effect on opinion in England. Furthermore, Palmerston, champion of constitutional liberties in Europe, could hardly leave unheeded Townsend's urging to the British government to rescue the "Yoruba" tribe who were living "under a free form of constitutional

⁵⁰Ghezo must have had some idea of the nature of Freeman's work since he was introduced as the 'English Fetishman,' ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²P.P., 1852 LIV (221), Beecroft to Palmerston, July 22nd, 1850, p. 29.

government very different from the tyranny of Dahomey and Ashantee. . ."⁵³ The failure of Beecroft's mission of May-July 1850 finally convinced Palmerston that 'nothing can be done with the King of Dahomey by persuasion.'⁵⁴

Palmerston answered Beecroft in terms suggestive that he was becoming impatient with "barbarous" African chiefs who insisted on maintaining their independence and obstinately refused to comply with British policy. Polite references to "His Majesty" and "Sovereign Chief" did not conceal the fact that Ghezo was regarded as a petty despot obstructing the civilization of Africa. This letter also revealed how committed to one side Britain found herself. Ghezo was bluntly told:

I deem it of importance to advert to the statement which you made to Mr. Beecroft, that you intended to make war upon the Chiefs of Abeokuta; and I feel it right to inform you that the Queen of England takes a great interest in favour of that city and its people, and that if you value the friendship of England, you will abstain from any attack upon and from any hostility against that town and people.

With respect to Ghezo's refusal to give up the slave trade, Palmerston replied: "But as you have declined to consent to what the British Government has asked you to do, the British government will be obliged to employ its own means to accomplish its purpose."⁵⁵ Two months later Palmerston informed Ghezo of the appointment of Louis Fraser as Vice-Consul to

⁵³Ibid., Townsend to Secretary of the CMS, October 17th, 1849, Inclos. I in No. 4, p. 34.

⁵⁴Minute by Palmerston, September 30th, 1850, on Beecroft to Palmerston, July 22nd, 1850. F. O. 84/816 No. 9. Cited in Ellingworth, JAH, V, 2, 210.

⁵⁵P.P., 1852, LIV (221), Palmerston to King of Dahomey, October 11th, 1850, Inclos. 1 in No. 10, pp. 44-45.

Whydah. In characteristic Palmerstonian language, Ghezo was again warned that Fraser had been instructed to inform him

that it is useless for any African sovereign or chief to suppose that he can be able to carry on that slave trade in defiance of the determination of Great Britain to put an end to it; and that the best way of securing the goodwill and friendship of England is promptly and completely to put the slave trade down.⁵⁶

These veiled threats suggest that Palmerston had abandoned persuasion and was resorting to premature "imperialist" techniques, although he probably did not expect Ghezo to be unduly perturbed.

During the mission to Abeokuta in January 1851, Beecroft remained Townsend's guest and one would imagine that the latter did not fail to impress him with a pro-Egba account of the situation.⁵⁷ At a public palaver attended by most of the chiefs (this included the Ogboni, Parakoyi (trade chiefs) and twenty Ologun), Beecroft explained Britain's policy of encouraging legitimate trade and suppressing the slave trade.⁵⁸ In reply, Okukenu said that nothing could be done to introduce legitimate trade until the obstacle of Lagos was removed. He stressed further that the Egba were anxious to re-instate Akitoye, and also that they were surrounded by enemies on every side -- Kosoko at Lagos, the Jebu to the East, and the Dahomi to the West.⁵⁹

⁵⁶Ibid., Palmerston to King of Dahomey, December 11th, 1850, Inclos. in No. 19, p. 80.

⁵⁷Biobaku, p. 42.

⁵⁸Ibid., Beecroft was wise enough to supplement the palaver by individual interviews with leading chiefs. The mixed reaction he encountered clearly indicated the presence of an anti-English opposition.

⁵⁹P.P., 1852, LIV (221), Beecroft to Palmerston, February 21, 1851, p. 91. Townsend to Lay Secretary, January 28th, 1851, report on the palaver with Beecroft and the chiefs. (CA2/M2).

The Egba portrayed Kosoko as the root of all their problems. He was bribing the slave traders of Abeokuta, inciting persecutions of Christians, as well as bribing Dahomey to attack Abeokuta.⁶⁰ Furthermore, by focusing on Kosoko's culpability, the missionaries tended to play down the opposition to British influence that gravitated around Whydah, Lagos, the war-chiefs at Abeokuta and most of the Porto Novo and Badagry chiefs. Kosoko, in fact, was only exploiting opposition to the British (and to the Egba), not creating it. This can be seen with respect to the situation at Badagry.

On his return to Badagry, Beecroft reported that he had communicated with Gollmer and Akitoye and had learnt from them that there existed a league formed by Kosoko with the chiefs of Badagry. Actually the pro-Kosoko forces had gained ground but were really more anti-Akitoye (he had disrupted trade) than pro-Kosoko. Beecroft concluded that Kosoko was planning to attack Badagry and that therefore Akitoye was in danger. In retrospective, this report had the effect of discrediting Kosoko and fomenting hostility towards the Badagrians. Kosoko was referred to as a "rascal" and the Badagrians as "worthless vagabonds."⁶¹

The Lagos-Badagry dispute had long historical origins, neither the missionaries nor Beecroft were able to comprehend. We recall that Badagry was founded by several groups of refugees in the 18th century.⁶² The Gun people had settled in the wards

⁶⁰ As reported by Beecroft, *ibid.*, Townsend to Lay Secretary, July 8th, 1851 (CA2/M2).

⁶¹ P.P., 1852, LIV (221), Beecroft to Palmerston, February 21st, 1851, p. 91.

⁶² See above p. 37.

to the west, the Hueda to the east, the Wemenu in the centre. They intermarried within themselves and with the Yoruba of Lagos. The title holders from Wharako ward went to Porto Novo for ordination and remained sensitive to politics in that quarter. On the other hand, the leaders of Ahoviko ward married women from Lagos and cemented alliances to the east.⁶³ In the main, it was these Badagry-Porto Novo and Badagry-Lagos alliances that more than any other factor were responsible for the trouble in Badagry.

It is important to understand how the Lagos dynastic dispute engulfed Badagry and the missionaries. When Akitoye was expelled in 1845, he sought refuge first in Abeokuta and later in Badagry with the Wawu of Ahoviko ward. During this same period Mewu, driven out from Porto Novo by King Meyi, associated himself with the chiefs of the Wharako ward. The two factions combined to disrupt trade and to make a bid for British assistance. But the British missionaries, who were also associated with the chief at Ahoviko ward, simplified these factional disputes in terms of those who were for and against the slave trade.⁶⁴

Enemies of Kosoko and Meyi were depicted as anti-slave-traders, on the ground of Akitoye's profession of ending the slave trade when restored. Akitoye, moreover, had a few partisans at Abeokuta.⁶⁵ It was these verbal promises that

⁶³This outline is based on the account of Newbury, pp. 30-32.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 47. This author stresses that the missionaries also simplified the Badagry ward structure and confused the names and titles of the leading chiefs.

⁶⁵P.P., 1852, LIV (221), H. Straith to Palmerston, August 20th, 1851, pp. 133-34.

strengthened the belief that Kosoko was the obstacle to legitimate commerce and civilization.⁶⁶ Apart from that, Mewu and Akitoye gave little proof that they were bona fide opposed to the slave trade.⁶⁷ They were primarily interested in re-gaining their position and were not concerned where support came from. When British intervention did not take place in 1847, Akitoye turned once again to Martinez for assistance. Martinez marshalled Dahomi military support and help from some Awori and Egbado towns but he failed to take Lagos and overthrow Kosoko. The net result was a widening of the Akitoye-Kosoko dispute.⁶⁸

In the meantime Beecroft, unaware of the Foreign Office's decision to coerce Lagos, wrote another despatch to ensure the government's commitment, and for good measure included a letter from ex-King Akitoye.⁶⁹ This report did not substantially add any new information but was designed to engender the right emotional reaction from the Foreign Office.⁷⁰ He claimed that Kosoko's agents had conspired against his life and went on, irrelevantly but effectively, to refer to an alleged massacre of Akitoye's relatives by this "vile wretch" -- Kosoko -- in 1845. Frankly admitting his presumptuousness, he outlined his strategy for Lagos: "The best place to land to attack Lagos is at Badagry; . . . they all want coercion -- the Porto Novians as well as

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Mewu was later accused (in 1853) of being implicated in a clandestine slave trade with Martinez and the Egba. See below p. 94.

⁶⁸Newbury, p. 48.

⁶⁹P.P., 1852, LIV (221), No. 33, Beecroft to Palmerston, February 24th, 1851, p. 96. Ibid., King Akitoye to Consul Beecroft, p. 97, Inclos. in No. 34, Beecroft to Palmerston, February 24th, 1851, p. 96.

⁷⁰He merely repeated the points he made in his despatch of February 21st.

other; but Lagos ought not to be allowed to escape; place the right person there, all is well." More astonishingly, in view of the presence of a large number of anti-Akitoye chiefs at Badagry, was Beecroft's claim that his recommendation for the coercion of Lagos reflected "the sentiments of the principal war chiefs of that important place, . . ."⁷¹

In his letter Akitoye claimed to be the legitimate ruler who desired the peace and welfare of his people. He accused Kosoko of usurping a blood stained throne and of being "wicked" and "inhuman." Finally, he asked the British government

that you would take Lagos under your protection, that you would plant the English flag there, and that you would reestablish me on my rightful throne at Lagos and protect me under my flag: and with your help I promise to enter into a Treaty with England to abolish the slave trade at Lagos, and to establish and carry on lawful trade, especially with the English merchants.⁷²

Beecroft took the initiative and under duress removed Akitoye to Fernando Po for protection.⁷³

Palmerston decided on action and gave Beecroft the authority to conclude with Kosoko, and any other chief whose co-operation was desirable, a treaty for the abolition of the slave trade. The Consul was further instructed to warn Kosoko "that Great Britain is a strong Power both by sea and by land; and that her friendship is worth having; and that her displeasure is well to avoid."⁷⁴ If Kosoko refused to comply he was to be reminded that "Lagos is near the sea, and that on the sea are

⁷¹Ibid., No. 33, Beecroft to Palmerston, February 24th, 1851, p. 96.

⁷²Ibid., King Akitoye to Consul Beecroft, p. 97.

⁷³Ajayi, Ibadan, 69 (August, 1961), 102.

⁷⁴P.P., 1852, LIV (221), Palmerston to Beecroft, February 20th, 1851, p. 83.

the ships and canon of England; and also to bear in mind that he does not hold his authority without competition, and that chiefs of African tribes do not always retain their authority to the end of their lives."⁷⁵ Surely this must remain in the annals of 19th century Euro-African relations a classic example of European arrogance and intimidation.

One can sense that Palmerston was prepared to face the implications of his West African policy, but was still operating on the principle of inducing 'strong' despots to accept legitimate commerce with the compensation of a subsidy.⁷⁶ Although not beyond territorial ambition,⁷⁷ he was not yet committed to a foothold in Lagos. He was still treating missionary advice cautiously.

CMS PRESSURE PERSISTING

CMS influence persisted. In addition to deputations to the Foreign and Colonial Offices, the Society mobilized its sympathizers in naval quarters.⁷⁸ Not surprisingly, on at least one occasion it had advanced information of some forthcoming naval action. As early as August 20th, 1850, Townsend informed Sir T. D. Acland of the expected restoration of Akitoye.⁷⁹

⁷⁵Ibid., Palmerston to Beecroft, February 21st, 1851, pp. 85-86.

⁷⁶Gauin, Ibadan 69 (June, 1961), 27.

⁷⁷Dike notes that in making Beecroft's appointment, the paragraph denying territorial ambition on the part of Britain was crossed out in the original draft by Palmerston's own handwriting. Dike, p. 95.

⁷⁸A CMS deputation to Palmerston on March 12th, 1850 comprised the same representatives who interviewed the Foreign Secretary on December 4th, 1849, in addition to officers of the Preventive squadron -- Captain Denman, Pelham, and Trotter. Venn, Memoirs, p. 111; Hargreaves points out that the Admiralty retained its evangelical spirit and took a more positive view of its responsibilities in Africa. J. D. Hargreaves, Prelude to the Partition of Africa (London: Macmillan & Co., 1963), p. 32, cf. Venn lamenting five years later the loss of the Society's "best friend" in naval quarters, Captain Trotter. Venn to Irving, June 4th, 1855 (CA2/M3). See below, pp. 104-105.

⁷⁹Townsend to Sir T. D. Acland, August 22nd, 1850 (CA2/M2).

Townsend continued to be a strong advocate of coercive measures. A month before Dahomey's attack, he bluntly warned the CMS Lay Secretary that the country was faced with two alternatives: either the slave trade is destroyed or it will destroy the country. He urged violence if necessary.⁸⁰

Before any action could be taken against Kosoko, the long expected Dahomi attack against Abeokuta took place on March 3rd, 1851. The Dahomi forces were repulsed but at great cost in lives on both sides. The two factors most decisive in deciding the outcome in the Egba's favour were the encouragement and help of the missionaries and the devotion of Egba women. The missionaries helped with fortifications, first aid posts and military training, and the women ensured food and ammunition supplies.⁸¹

This was a great moment in the history of the Egba. With the assistance of the missionaries, the Egba had repelled a Dahomi invasion and had succeeded in holding the western march of Yorubaland from being absorbed into the powerful state of Dahomey. Townsend was overwhelmed with gratitude and hailed as the 'saviour' of the Egba nation. "Henceforth", Biobaku suggests, "he must be acknowledged as the real architect of Egba policy towards the British."⁸²

Meanwhile, missionary attention was once again focused further south. Action must be taken at Lagos and Badagry for Townsend had discovered that Possu of Badagry and Ghezo had conspired to destroy the Egba.⁸³ Once again the issues at Badagry were simplified. The evidence suggests that ever since Akitoye's

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Biobaku, pp. 43-44.

⁸²Ibid., p. 45.

⁸³Ibid.

presence at Badagry the road to Lagos had been closed and in particular shipments of produce and slaves down the Ossa lagoon were being disrupted.⁸⁴ Thus, the net result of the presence of Akitoye, Mewu, and a handful of missionaries was the disruption of the livelihood of the Badagrians which was contingent upon good relations with their trading partners -- Lagos and Porto Novo.

By 1851, most of the Badagry chiefs were getting tired of harbouring Akitoye and were trying to expell him in order to re-open the Lagos road and resume the trade in slaves and other goods.⁸⁵ In this they were opposed by Akitoye's allies. Martinez took advantage of the disruption of the Badagry trade and established a slave market at Ajida midway between Badagry and Lagos.⁸⁶ On being informed, the Badagry chiefs became incensed and a "civil war" erupted in June 1851. With the help of Townsend and Gollmer, palm-oil factors and naval officers, the pro-Kosoko chiefs were defeated by the Mewu-Akitoye forces. The role of the Egba was a little ambiguous. Townsend had encouraged Shomoye to send an Egba force allegedly to protect Badagry from Kosoko, but according to one observer, J. Sandeman, the Egba used the occasion to raid the Awori for slaves.⁸⁷

The CMS continued to press for government intervention and resorted to the clever tactic of sending Rev. S. Crowther to interview Palmerston and other government leaders, as well as

⁸⁴P.P., 1852, LIV (221), Gollmer to Captain Trotter, January 13th, 1851, p. 90. Ibid., Beecroft to Palmerston, February 21st, 1851, p. 91. Newbury, p. 47.

⁸⁵Ibid., Beecroft to Palmerston, February 21st, 1851, p. 91; Gollmer to Trotter, January 13th, 1851, p. 90. Ajayi, Ibadan, 69 (August, 1961), 99.

⁸⁶Newbury, p. 48.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 48.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Crowther was to convince officials in Britain that "if Lagos were under its lawful chief. . . an immense extent of country, abounding with cotton. . . would be thrown open to commerce. . ." ⁸⁸ By July 1851, Townsend was frankly asking for a "wise intervention in the affairs of the country." ⁸⁹ It ought to be stressed that although these letters were addressed to the Secretaries of the Society, the views thus expressed were diffused to the wider educated public (including leading government sympathizers) with the aid of a "comprehensive propaganda network" consisting of magazines, sermons, and special meetings. ⁹⁰

In the meantime, the Egba took the initiative and formally on August 15th, 1851, asked Britain for a treaty of commerce and friendship. They repeated their old grievance with Kosoko and requested military aid for themselves. They promised to send cotton, indigo, pepper, ginger, and ivory via the river road once Kosoko was removed. ⁹¹

Sensing some hesitation in naval quarters, Townsend proceeded to quell the notion that the Badagry "civil war" was only a "native squabble", and that the chiefs did not desire British intervention. He explained that the situation there had in fact resulted from British attempt to introduce lawful trade,

⁸⁸ Ajayi, Ibadan, 69 (August, 1961), 99. Only indirect references to Crowther's interviews were found. Venn's diary for March 22nd, 1851, has a note about attending a meeting with Palmerston and Crowther at the Foreign Office. Venn, *Memoirs*, p. 122. Six months later Venn informed Gollmer of a forthcoming interview of Crowther with Palmerston, and that the latter was ready to support any tribe willing to enter into an alliance with Britain for the purpose of ending the trade in slaves and introducing lawful commerce with Britain. Venn to Gollmer, September 9th, 1851 (CA2/M2).

⁸⁹ Townsend to Lay Secretary, July 8th, 1851, *ibid.*

⁹⁰ Oliver, pp. 4-5.

⁹¹ P.P., 1851, LIV (221), 'The Chiefs of Abeokuta to Palmerston,' August 15th, 1851, p. 139.

and that the trouble now was fomented by the slave traders who were attempting to eliminate the British.⁹² He re-emphasized that the missionaries were not concerned with persons or property, but with a principle: namely, "deliverance of Africa from the slave trade and the encouragement of lawful traffic."⁹³

Again we have missionary correspondence persisting with their image of slave and legitimate trades embraced in a life and death struggle. While this was fictional, broadly speaking, it was nevertheless true that Egba commerce would not flourish so long as the Ogun and Lagos were under Kosoko's control, and ultimately under the control of Britain's competitors -- the Brazilian traders. Moreover, the Society's ambition was no less than to see the whole country from Lagos to the Niger open to British commerce and civilization. These objectives could only be achieved by adding Lagos to Britain's 'informal' empire.⁹⁴

The missionaries who judged Africans behaviour from the vantage point of Victorian ethics, probably had difficulty in imagining that those who participated in the slave trade were anything but evil and degraded. At any rate the trade was responsible for the robberies and wars that plagued the country. The missionary reasoned that once the African learnt Christian ethics, this state of affairs would end.⁹⁵ Thus, conversion

⁹²Ibid., Townsend to Commodore Wilmot, August 5th, 1851, Inclo. 2 in No. 59, pp. 157-159.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴P.P., 1852, LIV (221), H. Straith to Palmerston, August 20th, 1851, pp. 133-34.

⁹⁵Gollmer to Venn, August 16th, 1851. (CA2/M2).

to the Christian way of life and adoption of 'civilized' customs implied, among other things, the complete abandonment of the slave trade, irrespective of economic and political consequences.

Perhaps it is not too surprising, then, to read Townsend stressing the 'flaw' in the African character, namely, the pre-occupation with prestige, self-esteem, and acquisition of wealth as the root of social problems.⁹⁶ He is correspondingly silent on dynastic disputes and European commercial competition. If CMS letters are to be believed prima facie, then the dispute with Dahomey was a fight between light and darkness,⁹⁷ and Lagos was captured "by the order of our great Captain above. . .⁹⁸ In effect, then, predisposed by training and temperament to regard economics and politics as incidental to great spiritual struggles, the missionaries concealed, albeit unwittingly, other important motives behind British activities.

It is significant to recall that throughout this period of intense missionary pressures, contrary to expectations, the slave trade was in rapid decline. As early as December 10th, 1850, Townsend reported a slump in the trade.⁹⁹ Four months later Gollmer informed Venn thus: "The reports respecting the stopping of the slave trade at Lagos are to us encouraging but to the slave traders maddening -- which they have shown at

⁹⁶ Townsend's Journal of the Quarter ending March 25th, 1847 (CA2/M1).

⁹⁷ Townsend to Lay Secretary, April 10th, 1851 (CA2/M2).

⁹⁸ Gollmer to the Secretary of the African Agency Committee, July 28th, 1852, ibid.

⁹⁹ P.P., 1852, LIV (221), Townsend to Captain Trotter, December 10th, 1850, p. 88.

Abeokuta by persecuting those who belong to the English white man."¹⁰⁰ It seems that the sudden halting of the slave trade completely disrupted the trading pattern on the coast: many slavers were ruined and even reduced to selling their "household furniture."¹⁰¹ Martinez himself had enough capital to survive but he discontinued buying slaves.¹⁰² Kosoko even allowed Thomas Hutton in Lagos in January 1851, thus abandoning his long policy of excluding all English traders.¹⁰³

It is possible to infer from these reports that the slave traders were in fact making desperate attempts to expel the British. Correspondingly a hardening in the attitudes of the missionaries can be noticed. Earlier demands for British intervention changed to a demand for a formal takeover. Gollmer wrote: "when Lagos comes under British influence, role, and power, it will prove the centre, seat and source for peace, and goodwill will emanate from the whole country."¹⁰⁴ Gollmer must have based this demand on some definite advanced knowledge of future British action, as he threw hints that Kosoko's days were numbered and that Beecroft had been given full authority to settle the Lagos question.¹⁰⁵

BRITISH INTERVENTION IN LAGOS

The circumstances that finally led to the bombardment of Lagos were characterized by differences of opinion in the

¹⁰⁰Gollmer to Venn, March 4th, 1851 (CA2/M2).

¹⁰¹Ross, JAH, VI, 1, 84.

¹⁰²Ibid., citing F.O. 84/865, Commander Forbes to Commodore Fanshawe, March 14th, 1851.

¹⁰³P.P., 1852, LIV (221), Gollmer to Trotter, January 13th, 1851, p. 90. This was communicated to Palmerston.

¹⁰⁴Gollmer to Venn, September 18, 1851 (CA2/M2).

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

British Cabinet, absence of clearly defined principles for executive officers on the coast to act upon, and the dominating role of two men -- Foreign Secretary Palmerston and Consul Beecroft. When Palmerston decided to act, he issued to the Admiralty orders carefully slanted with such words as 'piratical' and 'barbarous.' A blockade of Whydah was to be enforced and not raised till Ghezo signed a treaty. He added, further, that it was the Queen's pleasure that "the Commodore on the West Coast of Africa should be instructed to consider the practicability of such an operation [i.e., a force to expel Kosoko and the slave traders at Lagos], and to undertake it if it could be accomplished without much difficulty and risk."¹⁰⁶

These instructions were sent from the Admiralty to Commodore Bruce of the Squadron with a covering letter from the First Lord of the Admiralty, Baring, explaining that "with respect to that part of the instructions respecting Lagos, we leave the mode of carrying it out to your discretion and judgment." Finally, Bruce was directed "not to keep possession of Lagos, nor remain there beyond what is absolutely necessary."¹⁰⁷

According to Gauin, these rather ambiguous directives were issued against a background of objection from the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell; Lord Grey, Colonial Secretary; and Sir F. Baring, the First Lord of the Admiralty. Essentially it seems that Palmerston was able to prevail over the weak

¹⁰⁶ P.P., 1852, LIV (221), Palmerston to the Lords of the Admiralty, September 27th, 1851, pp. 135-36.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 'The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to Bruce,' October 18th, 1851, p. 138.

opposition of his Whig colleagues.¹⁰⁸ But Baring raised legal and ethical issues that could not be easily brushed aside. This ended in a Cabinet deadlock with ambiguous orders to Crown's executive officers, thus giving Beecroft the opportunity to take the initiative. Baring's final words in the covering letter did not of course contradict Palmerston's instructions, but appeared as though they did. Bruce, apparently sensing the circumstances, waited for further clarification.¹⁰⁹

While Bruce was waiting for words from home, Beecroft attacked but failed to take Lagos on November 24th, 1851.¹¹⁰ It seems Bruce and Beecroft had discussed the "instructions" with Bruce disapproving of Beecroft's suggestion that Lagos be taken. Bruce then acted strangely and seemed to have wished to absolve himself from the responsibility of taking the first step: he lent Beecroft a ship and retired to Sierra Leone.¹¹¹ Beecroft then met the more enthusiastic naval officers and enlisted Forbes' support by showing him an old despatch addressed to him, but only instructing him to proceed with a naval escort in order to induce Kosoko to sign a treaty.¹¹² Although Beecroft was censured, his action had involved British honour and prestige. Bruce ordered a blockade on December 6th, 1851 and a fully fledged attack was made on December 26th, 1851.¹¹³ The resistance

¹⁰⁸For a fuller discussion of the role of Palmerston and his Whig colleagues, see Gauin, Ibadan, 69 (June, 1961), 24-27.

¹⁰⁹Gauin, Ibadan, 69 (June, 1961), p. 25.

¹¹⁰P.P., 1852, LIV (221) Beecroft to Palmerston, November 26th, 1851, pp. 145-47. Beecroft reported that when Kosoko showed no desire to sign a treaty, he decided on a show of force. This provoked Kosoko to fire first on a British ship flying a flag of truce. The British landing party withdrew with heavy losses. Biobaku, p. 46.

¹¹¹Gauin, Ibadan, 69 (June, 1961), p. 25.

¹¹²P.P., 1852, LIV (221) Palmerston to Beecroft, February 20th, 1851, p. 83. Commander Forbes had returned from his Abeokuta visit of November 1851, where he taught the Egba military tactics and concluded an anti-slave-trade treaty. Biobaku, p. 46.

of Kosoko and Tappa (his caboceer or war chief) was finally overcome and on New Year's Day, 1852. Akitoye, as ruler of Lagos, then, signed a Treaty with Commodore Bruce.¹¹⁴

The participants agreed to abolish the export of slaves, to expel persons engaged in the slave trade, to convert their property to legitimate trade, to abolish sacrifice, and to adhere to an "open door" policy of free trade. Most important were the privileges granted to Christians. Missionaries and native Christians were to be protected and permitted to pursue their activities and encouraged to build residences, schools, and chapels.

Thus, with the cooperation of CMS missionaries, the Egba, naval officers and Beecroft, Britain added Lagos to her "informal" empire.

As men who were to administer the spiritual needs of Africans and who were not supposed to be "involved" in secular affairs, the missionaries did certainly breach the letter, if not the spirit of their instructions. They had continuously intervened in African tribal politics and had vigorously advocated the establishment of British paramountcy at Lagos and Badagry. Perhaps the CMS deceived itself by over-estimating its influence on the British government.¹¹⁵ However, it cannot

¹¹³P.P., 1852, LIV (221) 'Notification of blockade' by Commodore Bruce, December 6th, 1851. Inclos. 2 in No. 62, p. 162. All ports in the Bight of Benin except Badagry were blockaded.

¹¹⁴P.P., 1862, LXI (339), 'Treaty with the King and Chiefs of Lagos', January 1, 1852, p. 1. A similar Engagement was signed with the Egba at Abeokuta on January 5th, 1852, see Gollmer to Bruce, January 6th, 1852 (CA2/M2).

¹¹⁵Venn to the Brethern, February 24th, 1852 (CA2/L1). Venn here suggests that the information provided by Crowther to Lord Palmerston enabled the latter to issue the decisive orders to overthrow the slave trade party in Lagos.

be denied that at least on one or two occasions, Palmerston did officially acknowledge the recommendations of the Society. At any rate both Palmerston and Beecroft deserve credit for their respective contribution: one for consistently approving vigorous forward policies and the other for taking the initiative and committing the British government to action.¹¹⁶

The historiographical problems of the "real" reasons behind the bombardment of Lagos were first raised by Ajayi.¹¹⁷ He argued that older writers such as Geary, Cook, and Burns have based their conclusions on the white papers issued by the British government to justify their actions.¹¹⁸ These took the view that Lagos was bombarded because it was a notorious slave depot. Even contemporary scholars such as T. O. Elias, James Coleman, and J. F. Flint have quoted these views.¹¹⁹

But the evidence definitely suggests that the slave trade had practically ended by 1851. Moreover Lagos was not the most important slave depot in the Bight of Benin, but unlike Whydah it was open to naval action. The government did freely admit that its commercial objectives to open the Niger could not be achieved without control of Lagos. However, the white paper did not admit that the Brazilians were expelled, not so much because they were (or had been) slave traders, but because they monopolized the legitimate trade of Lagos and kept the British out.

¹¹⁶Newbury, p. 54; Ajayi, Ibadan, 69 (August, 1961), 102

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 96-105.

¹¹⁸Papers Relative to the Reduction of Lagos by H. M. Forces, P.P., 1852, LIV (221); Papers Relating to the Occupation of Lagos, (P.P., 1862, LXI (339))

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 97. T.O. Elias, Nigerian Land Law and Custom (1951); J. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (1960); J. E. Flint, Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria (1960).

Ross has contributed to the controversy by pointing out that Hutton was already established in Lagos by the end of 1851. Thus, he argues, Kosoko was not expelled to force the admission of British traders but because of the missionary tendency to view African politics in European terms.¹²⁰ But Hutton trading in Lagos did not mean British control of the trade there since he only represented one firm, and it is difficult to imagine that he was able to compete successfully with the established Brazilians.

¹²⁰ Ross, JAH, VI, 1, p. 84.

PART III 1852-1861, THE CONSULAR ERA

6. MISSIONARIES, CONSULS, AND MERCHANTS

CONSEQUENCES OF BRITISH INTERVENTION AT LAGOS

The act of intervention at Lagos resulted in far reaching commercial, political, and social changes. Akitoye's restoration was followed by the expulsion of the leading Brazilian and Portuguese slave traders and the confiscation of part of their premises and property.¹ In their place moved British and other European traders who were exclusively interested in the legitimate commerce of cotton, palm-oil, indigo, and shea butter. In March 1852 Gollmer transferred the CMS station from Badagry to Lagos, he was followed a year later by John Martin, the Methodist assistant-missionary.² "Thousands of emigrants" from Sierra Leone, Cuba, and Brazil took up residence -- those from Sierra Leone settling at Olowogbowo and those from Brazil at Campos Square.³ Missionaries and traders appropriated good land and Akitoye, weakened and seriously compromised, simply ratified land transfers. The missionary societies, together with the palm-oil factors, took strategic positions on the river frontage and pretentiously flanked the consulate.⁴

¹Ajayi, Ibadan, 69, 102. Most of these left in the period March-May, 1852. See enclos, in Gollmer to C. G. Philips, June 14th, 1853 (CA2/M2).

²Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 78.

³Ajayi, Ibadan, 69, 102. Compare with Newbury p. 56. At the beginning of the consular period Freeman estimated that there were 300 Sierra Leoneans and 130 Brazilian families.

⁴The leading palm-oil factors who arrived in the first few months of the consular period were McKoskry representing Hutton; Legreseley representing Banner Brothers; J. Sandeman representing Steward & Douglas; and O'Swald's agents. Newbury, p. 56.

The restored king had neither the power nor the authority to effectively resist the energetic expelled chiefs who refused to acquiesce in the change, and who patiently waited for the opportunity to engineer his overthrow. Akitoye, therefore, was forced to depend on the Consul, the British Navy, and the Egba for support. But if the power vacuum at Lagos was filled by the Consul and the Navy, the circumstances also provided an opportunity for consuls, missionaries, palm-oil factors, and 'Saro' to compete with each other for influence behind the throne.

The social consequences were even more far reaching. The liberated emigrants were provided with the opportunity to rise gradually to a dominant position among the African population. The Idejo or traditional chiefs, familiar only with their traditional slave trading ways, could not compete with this 'new' class who brought with them new skills and knowledge and used these to become landowners, farmers, middlemen, and hawkers. Some entered the export trade on their own account.⁵ These Idejo chiefs could do little but helplessly witness their economic power and political influence shifting from under their feet.

COLLISION OF MISSIONARY AND CONSULAR INTERESTS

The first Vice-Consul to Lagos, Fraser, appointed in May 1852, began to promote a policy that stressed commercial objectives before missionary endeavours, thereby initiating a divergence of missionary and consular policy in the area.

Fraser and the European merchants soon realised that the pro-British pro-Egba puppets installed at Lagos and

⁵Ibid., p. 56.

Badagry were having an adverse effect on the amount of trade coming down the Lagoon to Lagos. King Sodji at Porto Novo refused to open the Ossa Lagoon to the trade coming down from Porto Novo to Lagos via Badagry, allegedly on account of Mewu at Badagry, but really because of his commercial policy of diverting palm-oil canoes south-westward across Lake Nokue into the hands of Martinez. Trade between Lagos and Badagry was also interrupted by the presence of expelled Badagry chiefs at Ajido. Kosoko and Tappa at Epe added to Lagos' plight by robbing canoes from Ikorodu markets and thus diverting the Ijebu trade away from Lagos. Fraser attempted to negotiate with the expelled chiefs but any rapprochement was regarded as a threat by both Akitoye and the Egba.

Fraser's opportunity came when Possu the expelled chief from Badagry took refuge at Addo, once again besieged by the Egba on their return from the capture of Ipokia.⁶ He asked the Egba war-chiefs to withdraw their Addo siege and restore the expelled chiefs Wawu and Possu in place of Mewu who had signed a treaty with Britain.⁷ To justify the deposition a British naval officer alleged that Mewu acted as the middleman in the clandestine slave trade between recalcitrant Egba war-chiefs and Martinez. He had therefore breached the anti-slave-trade treaty of 1852.⁸ These allegations were never proved, but even if Mewu was involved in the slave trade, he clearly could

⁶Biobaku, p. 48.

⁷Fraser to the Chiefs of Abeokuta, January 8th, 1853 (CA2/M2).

⁸Captain Heseltine to the Chiefs of Abeokuta, January 7th, 1853, ibid.

not have been anymore guilty of slave trading than the chiefs the Vice-Consul was trying to reinstate. Besides, Fraser was prepared to ignore slave trading practices if it had no marked effect on palm-oil or cotton.

The Egba were not prepared to listen to Fraser's offer of mediation as Townsend's influence at Abeokuta, unlike Gollmer's at Lagos -- as we shall see presently, was unchallenged. Townsend at Abeokuta had continued in his triple capacity of confidential advisor to the Egba, mediator, and representative to the British authorities. He therefore stepped in and managed to induce the Egba war-chiefs to remove the Addo siege.⁹ Addo promised to keep the Badagry route open. Then the Society intervened on behalf of Mewu, with the result that Bruce (now Admiral and Commander of the West African Squadron) was officially instructed to observe a policy of neutrality among the several contenders -- with the exception of Akitoye who was to be supported.¹⁰

The CMS missionaries regarded a policy of reconciliation with expelled slave-traders as dealing with the forces of the devil, ostensibly because they had acquired the habit of thinking of African chiefs as either for or against the slave trade, but really because it was in their interests and in the interests of the Egba to keep Mewu and Akitoye in their respective places. Fraser's policy in its disregard of traditional disputes and in its threat to Egba interests was bound to encounter resistance. For the sake of trade, therefore, he was challenging at once

⁹Townsend to Venn, July 21st, 1853, ibid.

¹⁰Townsend to Bruce, January 17th, 1853; Bruce to Gollmer, March 8th, 1853, ibid.

Egba foreign policy and the interests of the Yoruba Mission.¹¹

The Society's policy, as previously mentioned, was to build the Egba as an example of enlightenment and civilization -- a "Sunrise within the Tropics." This policy inevitably meant a degree of Egba hegemony over its smaller neighbours to the coast and the control of Ogun commerce to Lagos. Pro-Egba allies at Badagry and Lagos would ensure that the whole area bounded by the Yewa and the Ogun, and between these towns and Abeokuta, remained an Egba sphere of influence. Abeokuta, in addition, was to be a base for further missionary penetration westward to Ketu, eastward to the Ijebu country and Ibadan, and beyond to the banks of the Niger.

The resistance to consular policy came initially from Gollmer who had become the chief advisor to Akitoye and the chiefs. Fraser and every other consul thereafter resented Gollmer's influence with the traditional authorities; in effect his interference in the political affairs of Lagos. Gollmer in turn charged Fraser of being the tool of British traders and even of the slave trading interests.¹² Gollmer was further involved in a personal dispute with J. Sandeman, one of the British traders, over an adjoining plot of land on the river frontage. An investigation revealed that the Society possessed an area larger than it was legally entitled to have. Gollmer agreed to surrender the disputed plot, but Sandeman rejected the

¹¹ The Egba leaders had difficulties in comprehending British behaviour: the King of Porto Novo and the expelled Badagry chiefs (traditionally anti-British) were supported against themselves and Mewu (traditionally pro-British). For the Egba view of events, see Townsend to Admiral Bruce, January 17th, 1853, ibid.

¹² Gollmer to Admiral Bruce, March 7th, 1853. (CA2/M2).

offer.¹³ The true cause of Sandeman's resentment was that the Mission had established an outlet for its Abeokuta cotton on the said land and were therefore competing commercially.¹⁴

Meanwhile at Lagos, Fraser's tolerance of opposition to Akitoye encouraged the insurrection of two pro-Kosoko war chiefs -- Possu and Ajinia. These were supported by Portuguese and Brazilian slave traders who had been allowed to return in September 1852 and had secretly renewed the slave trade. Kosoko and Tappa were invited to return, but the prompt despatch of Egba chiefs on their way home from Addo aborted the attempt.¹⁵ In the meantime Campbell was appointed Consul in July 1853. The rebellious chiefs took up arms again and secretly invited Kosoko to land in Lagos and regain his former position. Kosoko landed on August 13th, 1853 but was successfully resisted by the prompt intervention of Commander Philips of H.M.S. 'Polyphemus.'¹⁶ These events clearly show that the British, including the missionaries, committed to defend a weak puppet continuously challenged by strong pretenders, were inevitably drawn into African political squabbles.

As a result of complaints by the missionaries that too much of their collective energy was involved in commercial activities¹⁷ and political intrigues, a naval surgeon, Irving,

¹³The land question was investigated by Commodore R. D. White, see White to Bruce, February 28th, 1853, ibid.

¹⁴Gollmer to Venn, August 3rd, 1853, ibid.

¹⁵Gollmer to C. G. Philips, June 14th, 1853, ibid.
The insurrection took place on May 20th, 1853.

¹⁶ibid.

¹⁷See below p. 119.

was borrowed from the Navy and appointed by the Society as their 'consular' agent. Among other things, Irving was to relieve missionaries of "temporal" concern and to co-operate with them in ameliorating the social, political, and commercial conditions of native tribes. In Venn's own words, he was "to encourage and superintend various useful arts; to suggest improvements in the habits, the houses, the clothing, and the agriculture of the people." He was also to advise chiefs and help them with defence and fortifications. The objective was an alliance of chiefs of Ibadan, Ijaye, Ketu, with Abeokuta against "common enemies." Finally, Irving was to relieve missionaries of the task of communicating with consuls and officers of the squadron.¹⁸

In view of the subsequent change in the attitude of both the British government and the Navy vis-a-vis the Society, it is significant to recall that the appointment received the blessings of the Foreign-Secretary, Lord Clarendon. He expressed support for the Society's objectives,¹⁹ and further Campbell was instructed to provide every possible assistance to Irving.²⁰ The choice of a naval officer was not surprising as the Navy still had leaders who were deeply sympathetic to anti-slave-trade and missionary activities -- men such as Sir J. Graham (Lord of the Admiralty) and Admiral Bruce.²¹ Unfortunately suspicious missionaries increased the difficulties of Irving's task; Gollmer, in particular, resented him as a

¹⁸Venn to Edward Irving, March 29th, 1853, ibid.

¹⁹Lord Clarendon to Lord Chichester, F. O., June 11th, 1853 enclos. in Venn, et al., to Irving, December 23rd, 1853, ibid.

²⁰Lord Clarendon to Campbell, F. O., June 11th, 1853, ibid.

²¹By request of the Society a letter supporting Irving's 'mission' was sent by Graham to Bruce. See Venn, et al., to Irving, December 23rd, 1853, ibid.

threat to his "undivided sway in all matters concerning the Church Mission whether social, religious or political."²²

Irving died within two years without appreciably ameliorating inter-European relations.

Meanwhile at Abeokuta, the missionaries turned their attention to the perennial Egba problem: the existence of a plethora of chiefs and authorities at various level, and the absence of a leader comparable to the late Shodeke in authority and stature. The election of Okukenu as Alake (king) did not really solve the problem. He was granted all the trappings of royalty without an appreciable increase in power and authority.²³

Campbell, who replaced Fraser as the first Consul of Lagos in August 1853, was initially hailed as the relentless foe of the slave traders: his reprimand of the outgoing Fraser for keeping slaves, and his defeat of the pro-Kosoko insurrection were the evidence for this belief. Campbell began on auspicious terms with the Yoruba Mission. He dismissed charges that the missionaries were inciting the Egba to war, and argued that the traders' resentment was a grudge carried over from the days of the slave trade.²⁴ But Campbell faced with his predecessor's problems -- how to increase the volume of trade passing through Lagos -- was compelled to adopt Fraser's policy of promoting the commercial interests of Lagos. The good relations with the Mission, and with the Egba, deteriorated, as soon as Campbell's

²² Irving to Venn, March 6th, 1854 (CA2/M2).

²³ Biobaku, p. 52. Biobaku stresses the efforts of the Ologun chiefs to elect a weak ruler who would not hinder their activities. Okukenu was, therefore, neither the missionaries' choice nor the Ologun, but the result of a compromise. See Townsend to Graham, August 5th, 1854 (CA2/M1).

²⁴ Biobaku, p. 69.

policy began to be dictated by the commercial interests of Lagos.

The Egba had the typical grievances of producers. Most of the Lagos palm-oil trade was monopolized by Lagos and Sierra Leonian middlemen. The Egba complained that they were thus barred from direct access to European merchants and had to put up with low quality goods and inadequate prices.²⁵ The Society championed Egba rights. Irving was instructed to facilitate direct contact between native traders and white merchants, so as to prevent the "Sierra Leone spirit of exclusiveness."²⁶ Moreover it was not in the Egba interests to have palm-oil coming down from Ijebu and other places, as it created a glut and therefore lowered the price they received for their oil. In protest the Egba, in 1854, closed the roads leading to Lagos.²⁷ This immediately alarmed European merchants like McKoskry who received no return for the credit extended to the middlemen, and who once more possessed no effective means of recovering an accumulated debt that could amount to thousands of dollars in a matter of months.²⁸

Kosoko was asked to maintain good relations and refrain from robbing the Ijebu canoes bound for Lagos. These demands were ignored and kidnapping continued, Kosoko frankly admitting his need for revenue. Campbell's next step was to send an expedition in an attempt to dislodge Kosoko and his supporters from Epe but the expedition failed. The problem persisted. Trade

²⁵Ibid., p. 54.

²⁶Townsend to Straith, January 23rd, 1854, (CA2/M2).

²⁷Gollmer to Venn, June 29th, 1854 (CA2/M2).

²⁸Newbury, p. 60.

came only from Abeokuta, and the opening of the trade routes from Porto Novo and Ijebu could only be achieved by replacing Mewu at Badagry and reconciling Kosoko at Epe.

During January 1854, the Egba and Dosunmu at Lagos became alarmed over reports that Campbell was making peace overtures to Kosoko. They feared that Campbell would actually allow Kosoko to return to Lagos, as he and his allies were adept at the credit system of trading.²⁹ Campbell urged Kosoko to sign an 'Engagement' renouncing all claims to Lagos but the latter refused in spite of the advice of three-quarters of his war-chiefs³⁰ who pleaded "that they were tired of war and anxious to make peace."³¹ The Epe party had realised that there would be no point fighting British determination.

These negotiations outraged the moral sense of the missionaries,³² and Gollmer initiated a protest. He explained that several traders -- Sandeman and Hansen -- were behind Campbell's overtures,³³ and in the meantime worked hard to dissuade the chiefs from being party to any such agreement. Campbell retorted that he only wanted a reconciliation so that the Epe traders could come to Lagos and trade directly.³⁴ The Egba

²⁹Irving to the Secretary, January 30th, 1854, ibid.

³⁰Irving to Venn, January 20th, 1854 (CA2/M2).

³¹Campbell to the Chiefs of Abeokuta, January 6th, 1854, ibid.

³²Taylor, the Methodist missionary, tended to side with the merchants. It seems the Methodists were not yet expanding in the interior, and were not as committed to Abeokuta as the CMS. Besides, a source of friction between the two societies began with the allegation that the CMS missionaries at Abeokuta were making fun of the doctrine of Assurance of Salvation taught by the Methodists. Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 79.

³³Gollmer to Venn, March 10th, 1854 (CA2/M2).

³⁴Ibid.

increasingly concerned at the state of affairs, warned that Kosoko's return would lead to a civil war in Lagos and insisted on their participation in any peace talks.³⁵ Meanwhile Campbell ignored the protest of various parties and signed a treaty with Kosoko in November 1854. Kosoko was bribed to renounce hostile intentions and abandon the slave trade, in return for the port of Palma (right to collect duties) and a subsidy of \$1,000 per year for life.³⁶ Campbell's next move was an attempt to get Townsend and the Egba to remove Mewu. At first, Mewu was offered a pension and a position as "advisor" to Dosunmu at Lagos.³⁷ Then, Campbell moderated his demand and suggested that if Mewu could be persuaded to abandon the British treaty, in return, his stay in Badagry as a private citizen would be negotiated, provided he agreed to the return of the expelled chiefs who supported Kosoko.³⁸ It was thought that with Mewu removed and Possu and Wowu restored, a westward bound trade worth £250,000 would be diverted eastward.³⁹

Townsend on behalf of Abeokuta pointed out Campbell's usurpation of past policies: those who had in the past opposed British influence were treated with consideration and those who had traditionally supported the British -- Mewu and the Egba -- were treated unfairly and harshly.⁴⁰ The Chiefs insisted

³⁵Chiefs of Abeokuta to Campbell, January 6th, 1854, ibid.

³⁶Biobaku, p. 50.

³⁷Campbell to Townsend, April 19th, 1854; Campbell to Townsend, April 30th, 1854. (CA2/M2).

³⁸Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 78.

³⁹Campbell to Townsend, April 30th, 1854 (CA2/M2).

⁴⁰Townsend (on behalf of the Chiefs of Abeokuta) to Campbell, April 26th, 1854, ibid. A subsequent note accused Campbell of forcing natives for the sake of trade to submit to his command without regard to their feelings and interests. Townsend to Venn, May 25th, 1854, ibid.

that their honour was involved and that they could not abandon their friend and ally, Mewu. They agreed to reconciliation but not to expulsion.⁴¹ Campbell realised that reconciliation was unlikely and decided to use force: after two abortive attempts, he succeeded with the assistance of a British warship to oust Mewu and install his rivals.

The Society sought redress for the injustice allegedly inflicted on Mewu, and Campbell was warned of forthcoming representations to the British government.⁴² Receiving no response, Townsend took the matter directly to Clarendon, the Foreign Secretary. He claimed Badagry's economic decline was not only due to the Porto Novo embargo but also to the opening of Lagos as a free port which had resulted in the interior trade being drawn down the Ogun. He admitted that Okeodan was a slave trade mart but denied that Mewu was the agent.⁴³ In his opinion, the whole thing was a fabrication against Mewu, the real culprits being the King and chiefs of Porto Novo who purchased slaves at Okeodan and traded with Martinez.⁴⁴ The Secretaries of the CMS added that Campbell had appeased slave-traders and had antagonized Britain's traditional friends, particularly the Egba on whose behalf Britain had bombarded Lagos in 1851.⁴⁵ As a result of CMS complaints, Lord Clarendon expressed no more than a written disapproval of Campbell's interference in the affairs of Badagry.⁴⁶ There was no question of

⁴¹Townsend to Campbell, April 26th, 1854, ibid.

⁴²Townsend to Campbell, May 15th and May 16th, 1854 (CA2/M2). These two letters warned Campbell of an appeal to the government.

⁴³Townsend to Clarendon, May 23rd, 1854, ibid.

⁴⁴Townsend to Venn, May 25th, 1854, ibid.

⁴⁵Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 79.

⁴⁶E. Hammond (for Clarendon) to Chichester, F.O., August 25th, 1854. Enclos. in Secs. to Townsend, September 22nd, 1854 (CA2/L1).

censuring Campbell since Clarendon supported the negotiations with Kosoko, though disapproving of the treatment of Mewu.⁴⁷

DECLINE OF MISSIONARY INFLUENCE

Campbell's victory, or the victory for the trade interests of Lagos, if one may put it that way, is of some significance. The Society had for some time openly advocated Campbell's removal for one reason or another, so that the endorsement of his Lagos and Badagry policies was tantamount to a final rejection of missionary advice. Missionary correspondence abound with information testifying to the growing estrangement between the Society and the British government on the Lagos question. When the matter relating to Campbell was first taken up to Clarendon by Venn and Chichester in 1854, Venn expressed confidence that British justice, or the interest of "our native allies" -- the Egba, will not be surrendered.⁴⁸ Ten months later Venn, resigned to "secular obstacles" and discouraged, wrote to the same person explaining that Campbell had prejudiced their case with Clarendon, and that there was not much hope for his removal.⁴⁹

It is interesting to note how the missionaries explained their decline in influence and prestige both in naval quarters and in government circles at home. The influential naval anti-slave-trade zealots and CMS sympathizers -- among them Bruce, Coote, and Trotter -- had left the coast and were

⁴⁷See letter enclos. in Venn to Irving, June 22nd, 1855 (CA2/L2).

⁴⁸Venn to Irving, August 23rd, 1854, (CA2/L1).

⁴⁹Venn to Irving, June 4th, 1855, ibid.

no longer attached to the West African squadron. In their place moved a new crop of men (including a new commodore) who were not so susceptible to missionary pleading. Thus an era marked by vigorous naval - CMS co-operation was promptly brought to a close. The new relationship between the CMS and the squadron was clearly grasped by Gollmer who explained that since the "friends of Africa" have left the Coast, the Mission has learnt to rely more on the "man of war" (God) than on secular help.⁵⁰ Campbell's anti-missionary propaganda contributed its share to the change of attitude. Irving complained that Campbell continually bombarded the naval officers with the misdoings of the CMS,⁵¹ and as a result the Admiralty received continuous unsympathetic reports from the squadron.⁵² At home Palmerston was no longer Foreign Secretary and Venn lamented the loss of someone who "thoroughly understood the subject as well as being heartily with us."⁵³ He urged that divine assistance was even more necessary since "it is less on our powers than it was a short time since to influence the government in matters connected with the squadron and coast of Africa."⁵⁴ But the missionaries were generally too inclined

⁵⁰Gollmer to Venn, August 11th, 1854 (CA2/M3).

⁵¹Irving to the Lay Secretary, March 1st, 1855 (CA2/M3).

⁵²Venn to Irving, June 4th, 1855 (CA2/L1).

⁵³Venn to Gollmer, February 23rd, 1854 (CA2/L1).

⁵⁴Ibid.

to brood over their loss of prestige to realize that the real cause of their declining influence was the permanent shift of British interest and concern from Abeokuta to Lagos.

It is not difficult to see why traders and missionaries were emerging from a period of agreement and entering a period of disagreement. The British traders, and their spokesman consul, were primarily concerned with the limited objectives of developing Lagos' commercial potential and ensuring its financial stability. To achieve this end, it was necessary to make the British, not the Egba, paramount in Lagos. The CMS, on the other hand, was committed to promoting and improving the commercial, political, and military position of Abeokuta, for Townsend had rapidly realized that the work of the Mission in Abeokuta and in the interior depended ultimately on Abeokuta's survival.

There were other factors aggravating the relations between Consul and Mission. Both Irving and Townsend privately admitted that much of the disagreement over Epe and Badagry stemmed from Gollmer's bellicose personality. Townsend confided that the Mission sympathized with the Kosoko-Dosunmu peace talks but Gollmer had acquired the reputation of opposing all of Campbell's schemes. Besides Gollmer was sovereign in Lagos and inclined to do things secretly without informing his colleagues.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Townsend to the Lay Secretary, March 6th, 1854 (CA2/M2).

Irving agreed with Townsend on most points. He explained that the trouble was caused by Gollmer's vanity in being looked upon as the "chief Man in Lagos, and the great dictator of the Political war movements."⁵⁶ Irving recommended his removal from Lagos lest "he will do much to ruin the credit and character of the Mission in Yoruba."⁵⁷

Gollmer in turn claimed that Irving, misled by Sandeman as had Fraser and Campbell before him, had befriended Campbell and convinced his missionary colleagues at Abeokuta of untruths about himself.⁵⁸ The Society reacted to the various complaints against Gollmer with the usual absence of resoluteness. Gollmer was reminded of the Society's rule regarding non-interference in political affairs,⁵⁹ but Townsend was privately told that the Parent Committee realized the circumstances in which missionaries laboured and that "this principle [of non-interference] could not be strictly maintained."⁶⁰

Gollmer was undoubtedly a problem and his departure for Europe early in 1855 eased the tension a little. On the other hand much of the intra-missionary conflict

⁵⁶ Irving to Lay Secretary, March 8th, 1854, ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Gollmer to Venn, May 1st, 1854, ibid.

⁵⁹ Venn to Gollmer, June 30th, 1854 (CA2/L1).

⁶⁰ Venn and Clapham to Townsend, ibid.

can be attributed to Townsend's disposition to dominate colleagues like Gollmer and Mann.⁶¹ As the Secretary of the Yoruba Mission and the most experienced and influential missionary in the area,⁶² he regarded himself as head and rightful choice for the position of Bishop.⁶³ Venn permitted no hierarchy and insisted that every missionary was directly responsible to the Parent Committee. Townsend's resignation of the Secretaryship in 1855 temporarily alleviated the competition for leadership.

By early 1855 it became obvious that Gollmer was "losing out" to Campbell in the battle for supremacy at Lagos: Dosunmu was divested of almost all his authority⁶⁴ and Campbell had won the navy on his side. Soon McKoskry (on behalf of European merchants) lodged a petition against the return of Gollmer and Townsend who went on leave in May, 1855. The petitioners argued that Townsend and Gollmer were disposed to foment civil strife, interruption of trade, insecurity to property and detention of vessels, and that peace and security had greatly increased since their departure.⁶⁵

Enmity between the missionaries and Consul deepened. Campbell continued to resent missionary influence in the sphere

⁶¹Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 182.

⁶²Venn to Colonel Ord, October 25th, 1864 (CA2/L3).

⁶³See below p.p. 128 ff.

⁶⁴Irving to Lay Secretary, March 1st, 1855, ibid.

⁶⁵Protest against the return of Messrs. Gollmer and Townsend, enclos, in T. B. Horsfall, M.P., to the Secretaries, December 28th, 1855. Petition signed on November 9th, 1855 (CA2/M3). See below p. 114.

which properly belonged to him as British Consul. In a bitter tone he confided to Irving that the missionaries "have had no right to do what they have done."⁶⁶ It was the Mission's promotion of pro-Egba interests that he was determined to resist. Campbell admitted to Rev. S. Crowther that it was not the intention of the authorities that the Egba should have so much influence over their smaller neighbours.⁶⁷

The Society lodged a complaint against the Consul alleging that following Gollmer's departure for England he had forcibly misappropriated a piece of land belonging to the Society.⁶⁸ Campbell, on the other hand, lodged a complaint that Gollmer and others were in a plot to assassinate him.⁶⁹ The missionaries retorted that Campbell was destroying British influence by countenancing slave trade chiefs. Campbell replied that there were no slave trade abolishing chiefs around Lagos and stressed that continued Egba hostility towards Kosoko was only a camouflage for their slave trading activities.⁷⁰ Only Campbell's visit to Abeokuta in November 1855 ameliorated relations.

At the request of the Foreign Office the Admiralty designated Commodore Adams to investigate the land dispute.⁷¹ The investigators concluded that the Society already possessed premises in excess of its legal right and, therefore, the ground in dispute could not possibly be part of the land granted to the

⁶⁶Irving to Lay Secretary, March 1st, 1855, ibid.

⁶⁷S. Crowther to Venn, May 10th, 1855 (CA2/M3).

⁶⁸Irving to Campbell, April 3rd, 1855, ibid.

⁶⁹S. Crowther to Venn, May 10th, 1855, ibid.

⁷⁰Biobaku, p. 55.

⁷¹Clarendon to Lord Chichester, June 12th, 1855 (CA2/L1).

Society.⁷² This pronouncement 'against' the Society was expected as Venn had explained earlier that "the authorities at home are not disposed to place that confidence in the Society which other Administrations have done."⁷³ The news of Irving's and Bishop Vidal's deaths⁷⁴ added to the discouragement, but Venn expressed faith that God would not let their work perish.⁷⁵

If the period 1854-55 was dominated by continuous squabbles between Consul and missionaries; the period commencing 1856 was one of comparative calm and co-operation. Gollmer was moved to Ake, Abeokuta; Crowther took his place in Lagos; and the turbulent years at Lagos came to an end. The Mission forced to "abandon" Lagos concentrated on the task of establishing stations in the interior, building schools and a cotton industry. Campbell settled down also and co-operated with the Mission in exploring the economic potentialities of Yoruba.⁷⁶

⁷² Lord Wodehouse (on behalf of Clarendon), F. O., to Earl Chichester, July 28th, 1855, ibid.

⁷³ Venn to Smith, July 23rd, 1855, ibid.

⁷⁴ Venn to Hinderer, July 23rd, 1855, ibid. Bishop Vidal visited Yoruba in 1854 and died the same year.

⁷⁵ Venn to Smith, July 23rd, 1855, ibid.

⁷⁶ See below p. 117.

7. THE WORK OF CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COTTON INDUSTRY AT ABEOKUTA

In Abeokuta, the missionaries, unhindered by other European factors and sympathetically supported by the civil authorities, were in an ideal position to test Venn's ideas. As early as 1846 Townsend was writing to the Society about the potential of growing and expanding such produce as cloth, cotton, indigo, ivory, palm oil, and salt.¹ The political instability of the area and the precarious position of the missionaries prior to the bombardment of Lagos in 1851 meant that little was done for three or four years. In 1850 Townsend was still being asked to collect various specimens of cotton seeds, observe the quality of various soils, and send information about native manufacturing.² It seems that the great impetus to cotton growing was given by the rise in demand for cotton that began to be noticed by about 1850.³

Venn co-operated at the other end in Britain by enthusiastically promoting the idea of cotton cultivation in West Africa. He tested various specimens of cotton, proved the superiority of Sierra Leone arrowroot,⁴ and by 1850 had decided to appeal to the economic-philanthropic interests of

¹H. Townsend to Lay Committee, June 25th, 1846 (CA2/M1).

²Venn and Straith to Townsend, November 29th, 1850 (CA2/L1).

³Ibid.

⁴Venn Memoirs, p. 377.

Manchester. His correspondence from about 1850 onwards indicates that he was very active in contacting, petitioning, and urging philanthropic-minded Manchester merchants to subsidize a cotton industry and an export outlet at Lagos.⁵ On the whole the Society did not receive overwhelming support. Frequent references to "Manchester Merchants"⁶ appear in missionary correspondence, but Thomas Clegg is the only name consistently mentioned. Until the 1860's, Clegg was the only merchant who made a sustained effort to co-operate with Venn. Other merchants, sympathetic but in practice, less interested, contributed in the form of donations of money and machinery.⁷

Venn, in addition, was able to rely on bands of philanthropists who were able to assist in various ways. Baroness Burdett Coutts donated the first cotton gin sent to Abeokuta and a wealthy Quaker -- Samuel Gurney -- paid for the first press.⁸ Venn was also assisted by the African Native Agency Committee which included such distinguished philanthropists as the Earls of Shaftesbury, Harrowby, Sir T. A. Acland, Sir Robert Inglis, and Sir E. N. Buxton. These 'Friends of Africa' were to administer the training of Africans for various skills by sending out,

⁵Occasionally the CMS resorted to more spectacular tactics such as sending Rev. S. Crowther to interview commercial firms in Manchester and other cities. Venn to Gollmer, October 14th, 1851 (CA2/L1).

⁶The information is scattered. A number of references appear in Venn's Memoirs in the form of brief daily diary entries simply noting visits to various merchants. Venn, *Memoirs*, pp. 119-36. (These entries were made in the period 1850-1856).

⁷A brief reference is made here to "Manchester Merchants" sending machines to Africa and training African apprentices, and Sir E. N. Buxton donating £200 for buildings and the encouragement of cotton. Venn, Clapham and Straith to Irving, December 23rd, 1853 (CA2/L1). A Mr. J. Pender, a merchant with warehouses, supported the Society's objective with £500. *Ibid.*, p. 136. (Entry made on November 17th, 1856).

⁸Biobaku, p. 58.

at their expense, European artisans to work in Africa and to bring African youths to English factories.⁹

Thomas Clegg provided capital in the form of cotton seeds, cotton presses, and saw gins; in addition he assisted with the establishment of an industrial institution¹⁰ at Abeokuta in 1856.¹¹ Clegg also agreed to train Africans in his Manchester factory in the techniques of cotton processing. The best 'Saro' artisans like Josiah Crowther, son of Rev. S. Crowther, and Henry Robbin, whom we shall encounter again, were sent to Clegg so that on their return they could pass on their knowledge to as large a number of people as possible.¹² These youths trained in England were to supervise the cotton stores, where cleaning and packing was done, and also act as Clegg's agent, but only in the sense of providing the service of transmitting each consignment on behalf of individual African producers, receiving in return only a small commission.¹³ At Lagos a cotton store and a hydraulic press for preparing the cotton for shipping were established on the Society's disputed premises.¹⁴

Thus mainly through the efforts of Venn and Clegg the first consignment of African cotton left Lagos for Britain in 1852; from then onward the export of cotton increased until it reached 4,000 cwts, in 1860.¹⁵ MacGregor Laird agreed in

⁹Townsend to Lay Committee, June 27th, 1847 (CA2/M1).

¹⁰On Clegg's contribution the most useful sources are: Straith to Gollmer, November 25th, 1850 (CA2/L1); Venn, Memoirs; Ajayi, JHSN, I, 4, 337-40; Venn, West African Colonies, p. 33; and Biobaku, p. 58.

¹¹See below p. 117.

¹²Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 156.

¹³The Society was authorized to draw bills upon the "Manchester Merchants" for any amount of cotton presented at Lagos. The Secretaries to Irving, December 23rd 1853 (CA2/L1); Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 84.

¹⁴Gollmer to Venn, August 3rd, 1853 (CA2/M2).

¹⁵Venn, West African Colonies, pp. 33-34.

1853 to provide the facilities of his African Steamship Company for transporting consignments of cotton from small African traders.

THE FAILURE OF VENN'S SCHEME

To recapitulate, Venn's commercial venture in Abeokuta depended for its success on two things: missionaries were not to turn traders but act merely as "agents", and the trust system used in palm-oil trading was to be avoided so as to encourage the growth of an African middle class. By and large, these principles remained an unattainable ideal, and though cotton was exported from Abeokuta it did not become a major export crop, nor did it achieve the social and economic revolution envisaged by Venn.

The root of missionary-trader dispute in Lagos was that Gollmer and Townsend had taken advantage of their position to ship their own supplies of cotton directly from Lagos. In effect, they were accused of becoming mercantile speculators, and of using the adjoining disputed plot already referred to as an outlet.¹⁶ That Townsend, at any rate, was so involved is hard to believe, but it was on this ground that the British traders in 1855 submitted a petition against their return.¹⁷ Even if these mission leaders were not involved in personal trading ventures, the whole Mission was increasingly devoting more and more energy to secular affairs, at a time in the early 1850's when the whole effort at Abeokuta was jeopardized by inadequate resources, funds, and agents. For example, Paley died¹⁸

¹⁶Biobaku, p. 54.

¹⁷See above, p. 108.

¹⁸Paley, the grandson of the Evangelical theologian arrived in 1853, Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 150.

a few months after his arrival in the Egba capital to found the Abeokuta Training Institution. A surgeon, Hensman, who had gone with the Niger Expedition of 1841 arrived at Abeokuta in 1851, but died within 18 months.¹⁹

With such hazards involved, replacements were difficult to find, consequently there was always a chronic shortage of European and African agents. Townsend pointed out that the demand for missionaries by neighbouring chiefs could not be met because of the shortage of teachers and other personnel.²⁰ Still missionary expansion was not neglected.²¹ Understandably, Townsend complained to the Society in London. He urged Venn that "with regard to the purchase of cotton for Mr. Clegg or anyone else that enough has been done, and it should stop as soon as possible, it will do our mission no good if continued: the main thing must not give place to a matter of commerce and civilization however desirable in itself."²² But it was too late to do anything now, and as the missionaries became more involved the problem grew more acute.

With regard to Venn's scheme of direct trading, the independent farmers did not mind waiting a few months before they could cash their bill of sale, particularly when palm-oil was still Abeokuta's main export staple. But the whole idea of each farmer sending his cotton directly to Manchester with his own markings, etc., was as much a joke as it was unpractical.²³

¹⁹Biobaku, p. 46.

²⁰Townsend to Venn, May 1st, 1852 (CA2/M2).

²¹See below p.p. 132 ff.

²²Townsend to Venn, May 17th, 1853 (CA2/M2).

²³Ajayi, Christian Missions, pp. 84-85.

Secondly, the English trained youths who began to arrive at Abeokuta in February 1856 were hardly impressed by the financial prospects awaiting them in employment with the institution. They knew they could make much more as agents for the palm-oil factors who had also arrived in 1856.²⁴ Prospects were particularly favourable for the 'Saro', as the newly arrived white merchants established the practice of buying directly from any native suppliers and were thus breaking the Parakoyi, the traditional trade chiefs who had hitherto monopolized the trade at Abeokuta.²⁵ It was all very well for Venn to argue that natives employed by the Society should not be seduced by European comforts, but it was another thing for them to make both ends meet on a pitifully low salary²⁶ when their compatriots, as in Freetown, were thriving in the world of business.

As a result of these difficulties, the Abeokuta Industrial Institution was established in 1856. It was designed to provide apprenticeship training in carpentry, printing, bricklaying, dyeing, and also to train youths in all aspects of cotton preparation. The Institution was also to act as 'a depot for receiving, preparing, and sending cotton to England.'²⁷ Henry Robbin and Samuel Crowther, Jr., (eldest son of Rev. S. Crowther) now back from England were appointed managers. In this way they were assured of a

²⁴Ibid., p. 85.

²⁵Townsend to Venn, November 26th, 1857 (CA2/M3).

²⁶See below, p. 128, fn. 75.

²⁷Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 85.

decent income. But the Institution was still not in "working Order", and Townsend stressed the need for more agents and more general assistance.²⁸ The obvious need for government assistance provided the common ground for cooperation between the Mission and Consul Campbell. Campbell was instructed to supply Abeokuta with cotton gins at cost price on easy financial terms. The Mission also received financial assistance to improve the road leading from Abeokuta to the river Ogun.²⁹ All this helped to bring costs down,³⁰ freight costs in particular, but the unmechanized industry using inexpensive hand gins was still faced with high labour costs.³¹ Nevertheless, by October 1857 the scheme of buying cotton direct from native suppliers was showing good results.³²

But now Venn had discovered that Clegg had advanced trust to the managers of the Institution, and was trying to acquire control in order to introduce steam-powered machines and run the whole thing on a more profitable basis.³³ So far Venn had not allowed large-scale investment because he wanted the capital to come from Africans. The trouble was that they could not raise sufficient capital for mechanization,³⁴ and, therefore, the industry remained economically inefficient. Clegg was supported by the managers who were keen on becoming his

²⁸Townsend to Venn, March 31st, 1857 (CA2/M3).

²⁹Townsend to Venn, May 26th, 1857 (CA2/M3).

³⁰Townsend to Venn, October 1st, 1857, ibid.

³¹J. B. Webster, "The Bible and the Plough," JHSN, II, 4 (1963), 422.

³²Gollmer to Venn, November 2nd, 1857 (CA2/M3). Venn was informed that 300 bales of cotton were dispatched from Abeokuta within a few months.

³³Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 85.

³⁴Webster, JHSN, II, 4, 422.

agent provided they were advanced sufficient capital.³⁵ Venn pleaded with Robbin and reminded him of the goals of the CMS. He was supposed to make his countrymen "... act as Principals in the commercial transactions, to take them out of the hands of European traders who try to grind them down to the lowest mark." All this in the hope that a large body of independent growers of cotton and traders would emerge and "... form an intelligent and influential class of Society and become the founders of a kingdom which shall render incalculable benefits to Africa and hold a position amongst the states of Europe."³⁶ This objective would be undermined if Robbin sided with those European traders who sought to cajole Africans in parting with their goods for the cheapest possible price.³⁷

It was then that the future of the cotton establishment at Abeokuta and Lagos, and the question of the mission's native agents involved in trade, became the source of a long controversy between the leaders in London and the missionaries in the field. In November 1857, the Abeokuta Industrial Institution was reported in financial difficulties, and Robbin was advanced £200 by the Society to stay in business.³⁸ It was alleged that the native traders were alienated³⁹ by the "shoddy and unreliable goods" that Clegg offered in exchange for cotton.⁴⁰ But the financial problems were not thereby resolved, and when the

³⁵Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 85.

³⁶The Secretaries to Henry Robbin, January 22nd, 1857 (CA 2/L2).

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Townsend to Venn, November 26th, 1857 (CA2/M3).

³⁹Townsend to Venn, November 30th, 1858 (CA2/M4).

⁴⁰Townsend to Venn, April 30th, 1858, *ibid.*

Institution's accounts for 1858 were investigated, it was discovered that up to £1800 in trusts was owed to Clegg, in addition to some money to the Society.⁴¹ There was nothing to do but to surrender the Institution to Clegg.⁴² Robbin, however, remained in his position of supervisor.

This does not mean that the CMS was thereby able to immediately sever its connections with commercial cotton production in Yoruba. With all its various interests, including a cotton boat and the cotton warehouse at Lagos, the disengagement had to be a gradual process, and it was not till March 1863 that the Society managed to separate commerce from training in the cotton scheme.⁴³ But it was the Yoruba missionaries led by Townsend that pressed for a prompt end to the mission's participation in the cotton project. He expressed his distaste for the role of commercial agents which had only resulted in a neglect of spiritual endeavours. He added that the industry sufficiently developed to be taken over by private merchants.⁴⁴ Townsend had the support of the finance committee of the Yoruba Mission.⁴⁵ Venn replied that the connection with the cotton business ought to be continued until the debt to Clegg was liquidated.⁴⁶

The thing that particularly irked Townsend and his colleagues was that the Society closed an eye to native agents

⁴¹Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 86.

⁴²In a resolution by the Parent Committee, Townsend to Venn, April 30th, 1858 (CA2/M4).

⁴³Kopytoff, p. 120.

⁴⁴Townsend to Venn, September 28th, 1858 (CA2/M4).

⁴⁵Townsend to John Hall, October 29th, 1858, ibid.

⁴⁶Venn to Townsend, October 22nd, 1858, cited in Townsend to Venn, November 30th, 1858, ibid.

engaged in trade. S. Crowther, Jr., and Robbin were initially granted special permission to engage in private trading for the expressed purpose of launching the cotton business of Abeokuta. Now that this was achieved, argued the Church missionaries, there was no reason to perpetuate this privilege, as it was unfair to those others who adhered to the Society's instructions forbidding participation in commercial activities.⁴⁷ Townsend complained that S. Crowther, Jr., had not made a special contribution to the Mission but had neglected his duties for personal trading ventures.⁴⁸ We note, however, that Crowther (a Fourah Bay graduate) belonged to the 'Saro' group challenging the influence of European missionaries, especially Townsend's.⁴⁹ Crowther was also Robbin's rival for the position of director of the Industrial Institution, and Townsend was anxious to throw his weight behind Robbin, one of Townsend's supporters among the educated 'Saro'. Thus the whole clash with native agents had overtones of the much forecasted political rivalry between educated 'Saro' and their European mentors. We will return to this question in conjunction with the Venn-Townsend dispute over a native pastorate.

MISSIONARY SCHOOLS IN ABEOKUTA

The necessity for converts to know how to read, write, and make Bibles ensured that the work of reducing Yoruba and other Nigerian languages to writing and of establishing a school

⁴⁷Minute of a Missionary Conference held at Ikija, Abeokuta, October 7th, 1858, ibid. The conference urged the Parent Committee to separate from the Mission all agents employed in commercial pursuits.

⁴⁸Townsend to John Hall, October 29th, 1858, ibid.

⁴⁹See below p. 125.

system received prime consideration. We have already mentioned the work of Rev. S. Crowther in the field of linguistics. It is sufficient to add that it was the CMS who pioneered the work of translating the Scriptures, prayer books, etc., and devised the orthography on which is based modern Yoruba. Sunday schools were given an early priority, but we shall concentrate here on the more important work in primary and industrial education.

The primary school was designed to supplement the learning acquired in the home, and the emphasis, in view of the goals in mind, was on acquiring useful industrial and practical skills, rather than "useless" academic learning. The response was poor in the early years of the Mission. There were several problems. First, African parents were accustomed to profit from their children's labour in farms, at home, and so on.⁵⁰ Then, as is invariably the case, the education of a small minority led to cleavages in the community at large. Parents complained that schools taught disrespect for tradition and elders. On the missionary side, there were the practical problems of establishing a viable school system with inadequate resources and funds,⁵¹ aggravated by frequent premature deaths. But in spite of these difficulties, the several schools established by Townsend and Crowther, soon after their arrival in 1846, were able to survive and flourish.

⁵⁰Gollmer explained that at Badagry the Boarding School fell by the wayside because parents felt they were not receiving immediate material advantage by having their children attending the institution. C. A. Gollmer, Life and Missionary Labour in West Africa (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1889), p. 60.

⁵¹Townsend to Venn, April 1st, 1853 (CA2/M2); Townsend to Venn, May 1st, 1852, ibid.

At Abeokuta, children disliked attending schools and for one good reason. They were taken from the outdoor life they were accustomed to and made to sit in unventilated rooms behind desks all day long without physical exercise, which incidentally was not included in the curriculum.⁵² Besides, in the dry season, children helped with farm work and attendance was, therefore, irregular. To counteract this nonchalant approach to education, the Mission adopted boarding school system, with school children living in the Mission House as wards of the European missionaries and 'Saro' teachers. Though there was no uniformity, the schools varying from one station to another, a primary school curriculum was generally adopted throughout the Yoruba Mission. It consisted of the four R's: religion, reading, writing, and arithmetic. Instruction was to be in English with the vernacular used in the teaching of the Scriptures. Physical exercise and manual labour were conspicuously absent.⁵³

Missionaries observing the effects of education, particularly on those children who were physically removed from their families and placed in boarding schools, alleged that the educated sneered at those who were not. Consequently, a caste system was in danger of emerging. Furthermore, young educated Africans were developing traits of idleness, pride, and extravagance. The missionaries believed that these were innate defects accentuated by a literary type of education.⁵⁴ The panacea was the introduction of practical education: manual labour at the primary

⁵²Ajayi, Christian Missions, p.p.135 ff.

⁵³Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria, p.p. 138 ff.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 142-43.

and the 18th century, the 19th century, and the 20th century.

The 18th century was a time of great change and growth. The 19th century was a time of great change and growth. The 20th century was a time of great change and growth.

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level to be supplemented by training in the industrial arts -- printing, carpentry, masonry, shoemaking, dyeing, and so on -- at secondary training institutions.⁵⁵

THE CONTROVERSY OVER INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

The Abeokuta Training Institution was established by Paley for that very purpose. From the start, however, this training institution, which remained the only one of its kind in Nigeria until the late 1870's, became the object of constant disagreement between Venn and Townsend. After Paley died, T. B. Macaulay who had attended Fourah Bay and the CMS training College at Islington was chosen by Venn to head the school. Townsend found Macaulay too academic and accused him of instilling certain notions and attitudes in his pupils. He argued with Venn that during Macaulay's headship of the Normal School the "head was placed first, and heart second" with the result that his students were inclined to lack attentiveness and obedience. Townsend complained that with Lagos boys (those educated in the Fourah Bay tradition) it was a personal ambition to acquire "knowledge for its own sake" without regard to its use.⁵⁶ Macaulay was dismissed, replaced by King and then Kirkham, but both were unable to reverse the trends the former had initiated. Kirkham was finally dismissed because he was found incapable of counteracting the tendency of pupils to dictate to their teachers and to "resist being employed in manual labour."⁵⁷

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 143 ff.

⁵⁶Townsend to Venn, September 25th, 1857, ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

Disagreement on educational policy was focused in the debate between Venn and Townsend on the relative weight to be placed on the cultivation of the "intellect" versus the development of "right habits and feelings" in any system of education for Africans.⁵⁸ Townsend thought the latter -- the education of the heart -- was more important and ought to take precedence over the training of the "head" although both were to be developed. Venn evidently thought the reverse was more appropriate. There were no theoretical differences; both had stressed a practical type of education -- Yoruba language, apprenticeship in useful trades, and discouraged "book knowledge" such as Latin or Greek.⁵⁹

The real issue between Venn and Townsend centred on the usefulness of the Abeokuta Training Institution. As early as 1851 Townsend argued that the formal training provided by the Institution was unnecessary and dangerous. He thought that boarders ought to be trained informally in accordance with the Basle method, under missionary guidance and observation with the object of checking". . . that pride of dress and caste . . ."⁶⁰ Venn on the other hand, though agreeing with Townsend on the necessity of avoiding academic grammar schools,⁶¹ was too aware of his ambition to be taken in by these arguments. G. F. Buhler, a product of the Basel Society, finally took over the Training Institution in 1857, and under him it flourished until 1864. But he was always in dispute with Townsend over the

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Townsend's Journal for June, 1851 (CA2/085).

⁶¹Venn and Straith to Townsend, December 2nd, 1852 (CA 2/L1).

amount of literary education to be added to theology and industrial training.⁶² The missionaries in trying to avoid formal institutional education did not thereby discourage literary interests, but on the contrary encouraged them. The pastor-trainee who lived in a Mission House was naturally exposed to good books, and made good use of them since he needed a sound general background for his ordination examination. In effect, to get anywhere the young pastor, or educated 'Saro', had to acquire the very thing the missionaries regarded as dangerous. But why was Townsend so opposed to the educated African?

EUROPEAN MISSIONARIES VERSUS EDUCATED 'SARO'

As a product of missionary education Macaulay symbolized no more than its failure; instead of being docile and acquiescent as befit wards, he was critical, dissatisfied, and contemptuous of European missionaries.⁶³ Townsend had opposed him all along the way. In 1854 King and Macaulay were both ordained in spite of Townsend's objections. Because Macaulay was academically inclined with a distaste for manual labour, Townsend did not wish young impressionable children to fall under his influence. Now Macaulay featured prominently in the group of educated Africans who were challenging Townsend's authority and influence with the traditional leaders.⁶⁴

By the end of the 1850's the 'Saro' had become the missionaries' bete noire. They were often reproached for "bad

⁶²Ajayi, Christian Missions, pp. 150-52.

⁶³Townsend to Chapman, November 20th, 1858 (CA2/M4).

⁶⁴Featuring prominently in this "group" were members of Rev. Crowther's family: Macaulay (who had married one of his daughters) and his two sons, Samuel and Josiah.

behavior" and dishonest practices; on one occasion Townsend expressed alarm that the scum of Sierra Leone and Cape Coast were injuring the country.⁶⁵ If "honest" they were accused of using their education and talent for "selfish purposes".⁶⁶ It was unfortunate that such defamations had the effect of damaging the reputation of an entire group. They were indeed heterogeneous: some were wealthy traders, others were not; several were missionary educated, a few in England; some were raised by Townsend, others were against him; some were Egba, others were not. Most were churchmen and Christians (devout or nominal); others were questioning the cultural cleavages brought about by the mission village.⁶⁷ Undoubtedly, the crude commercial spirit of many of the traders led Venn to lament that the country made more progress in the direction of commerce than Christianity.⁶⁸ But the argument that all or most of the emigrants were affected in this manner could only be a gross exaggeration. Perhaps Townsend knew this but, nevertheless, resorted to these tactics in order to demonstrate the validity of his opposition to the promotion of Africans. Possibly the "bad" examples around him were sufficient to convince him that the "new class" had not acquired the proper habits and feelings. If the education system had produced such "misfits", then it obviously had to be discouraged. By 1860 Townsend was advocating abandoning the practice of sending Africans to Britain, on the grounds that they were spoiled and "lost" to the Mission.⁶⁹

⁶⁵Townsend to Venn, November 26th, 1859 (CA2/M4).

⁶⁶Bishop Bowen to Townsend, April 7th, 1859, ibid.

⁶⁷Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 189.

⁶⁸Venn to A. Mann, October 24th, 1859 (CA2/L2).

⁶⁹Townsend to Venn, February 28th, 1860 (CA2/M4).

VENN VERSUS TOWNSEND OVER THE QUESTION OF AN AFRICAN CHURCH

In the frequent squabbles with native agents (as with S. Crowther, Jr., and Macaulay), the Secretaries in London were inclined to side, or at least to sympathize, with them in opposition to the missionaries,⁷⁰ to such an extent that Bishop Bowen expressed concern at the formation of two parties -- a missionary party, and a native party resting on sympathy at home.⁷¹ To men like Townsend who witnessed educated Africans striking at the root of their authority and influence, the absence of official support from the authorities in London only helped to undermine their already waning influence.⁷²

The Society's utterances on behalf of African agents strengthened the position of that group of catechists and pastors who were in earnest about evolving an indigenous pastorate and episcopate in accordance with Venn's suggestions. It may be appropriate at this stage to outline the evolution of Venn's ideas on the question. He initially thought that pastors ought to be "unspoilt" with the most talented ones graduating into missionaries. However, as his estimation of native teachers increased he came to believe that pastors ought to be well trained, evolve a church and become bishops.⁷³ But faced with the established pattern of pastor training this was easier

⁷⁰After months of investigation the Society finally dismissed the long standing dispute between Townsend and S. Crowther, Jr., on the grounds that the charges against the latter were inconclusive. Secretaries to the Yoruba Mission, April 19th, 1861 (CA2/L3).

⁷¹Bishop Bowen to Townsend, April 7th, 1859 (CA2/M4).

⁷²Townsend to John Hall, October 29th, 1858, ibid.

⁷³Ajayi, JHSN, I, 4, 333.

said than implemented. Protestant missions more often than not produced inadequately trained pastors. Men were usually recruited on grounds of experience or devotion rather than education (which was of course unavailable in the early days of the mission), and it was expected that they would work their way up from catechists.⁷⁴ In addition, the low salaries paid by the Society proved an impediment in attracting the most able men from other occupations,⁷⁵ although some very capable men like the Rev. T. B. Macaulay and Rev. S. Crowther were found within its ranks.

Townsend exploited the drawback of pastor training to good advantage. He stressed that it was necessary to proceed with the policy of Africanization, but whatever talents Africans had they could not be put in the place of white men.⁷⁶ Here Townsend was going beyond questioning pastor training methods to casting grave doubts on the potential ability of Africans as a group. Townsend's opposition can be traced to the early '50's. He reacted to the proposed ordination of T. B. Macaulay and Theophilus King by insisting that as it took years of experience to train black clergymen it was "better to have them as catechists and schoolmasters."⁷⁷ He boldly asserted that in the "estimation of natives Europeans were superior" and thus a black bishop would never have the same influence and prestige.⁷⁸

⁷⁴J. V. Taylor, Christianity and Politics in Africa (Harmondsworth Penguin Books, 1957), pp. 10-11.

⁷⁵'Estimate for the Yoruba Mission for the year ending September 30th, 1862,' (CA2/M5). European missionaries like Gollmer and Hinderer received £250 p/a, native ordained clergy like T.B. Macaulay and J. White received £43/6/8 and £50 p/a respectively, while unordained European catechists received £100 p/a.

⁷⁶Townsend to Lay Secretary, April 10th, 1851 (CA2/M2).

⁷⁷Townsend to G. C. Greenway, October 20th, 1851, ibid.

⁷⁸Townsend to Missionaries, June 27th, 1847 (CA2/M1).

This formed the basis of his doctrine that the success of christianity in Africa depended on the prestige and influence of the white man.

In 1851 a proposal for the erection of an episcopal see at Abeokuta resulted in Rev. S. Crowther being summoned to England. Ambitious Townsend who regarded himself as the natural choice for the position immediately organized an opposition and sent a petition reiterating his stand. He argued that Crowther was often treated as the "white man's inferior", and that in general native teachers were respected not because of any special worthiness but "because they were agents of white men."⁷⁹ The issue was left dormant for a few years. In 1857 when the Society again reconsidered Crowther for the Bishopric, Townsend resumed his attack with forceful but not very convincing arguments. He contended that it was only the people in England, those who were not involved and knew least about Africa, who were sympathetic to the idea of native bishops. In any case, he added, a native bishop should not be appointed until there existed a native pastorate able to take over from Europeans.⁸⁰

The Society struck back with penetrating counter-arguments. An article in the 'Church Missionary Intelligencer' (August, 1858) supported the principle of a native episcopate and claimed that the missionaries resisted the establishment of native churches from "fear or love of power."⁸¹ The appropriate time for the advancement of a native church, continued the article, would be when missionary ranks have been depleted

⁷⁹Townsend to Lay Secretary, October 29th, 1851 (CA2/M3),

⁸⁰Townsend to Lay Secretary, July 27th, 1857 (CA2/M3).

⁸¹Cited in Townsend to Venn, October 18th, 1858 (CA2/M4).

from natural causes.⁸² The Society had clearly perceived what the missionaries were reluctant to admit: that they were competing with the educated minority for power and influence. Townsend retorted that a native episcopate would be a "heavy blow to the Church" and challenged the writer of the article to point to one in his congregation fit to become a pastor. He thought that any church in Africa was bound to reflect a foreign element alongside the native, and that since the missionaries were instrumental in bringing about this "revolution" they also ought to be the "leaders." Those who introduce Christianity should also organize and build the "edifice."⁸³

THE PROGRESS TOWARDS CHURCH SELF-GOVERNMENT

The opposition prevailed and by 1861 the organization of the native church had only proceeded to the stage of establishing church funds. In 1859 a "Church Fund," under the direction of the Society's agents, and a "Local Fund" under the direction of a local committee appointed by subscribers, were established at Lagos.⁸⁴ In 1862 this was extended to Abeokuta. The objective was to induce converts to make voluntary contribution to pay for the stipends of native teachers.⁸⁵ The "Fund" was to be supplemented by grants from the Society if necessary. This same minute expressed hope that these measures, to encourage an independent native pastorate, would remove the friction resulting from the "collision of races."⁸⁶ In theory, the dissatisfied elements were to be provided with the opportunity of rising

⁸²Cited in Townsend to Venn, November 30th, 1858, ibid.

⁸³Townsend to Venn, October 18th, 1858, ibid.

⁸⁴Venn to Townsend, October 23rd, 1859 (CA2/L2).

⁸⁵A Minute on Native Church Organization adopted by the Parent Committee, Secretaries of the CMS to Townsend, February 4th, 1862 (CA2/L3).

⁸⁶Ibid.

to the highest level in the service of the Church.

At Lagos the formation of a native pastorate was delayed till 1876 and was not completed until 1887, after a decade of opposition from European missionaries. Moreover, as in Freetown, the organization stopped at the "self-governing" stage. (i.e. with an African bishop) and remained under the jurisdiction of the English Bishop at Sierra Leone.⁸⁷ The white missionaries left Lagos and concentrated in the interior cities of Ibadan, Abeokuta and Oyo, and there the organization did not proceed beyond the church fund stage. Unwilling to aggravate missionary opposition, the Society remained reluctant to proceed to the last step and consecrate an African bishop. The sole exception was the all-African Onitsha Mission on the Niger. But even there the terms of Bishop Crowther's appointment in 1864 revealed concessions to missionary sensibilities. His diocese was not specifically defined -- it included all of West Africa except those specified British territories under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Sierra Leone⁸⁸ (Sierra Leone, Lagos, and Gambia) -- but his effective authority was severely circumscribed. The native ministers and the Church on the Niger were under his authority,⁸⁹ but in the remaining areas Crowther could exercise his episcopal functions in co-operation with Bishop Beckles (Bishop of Sierra Leone). Ibadan and Abeokuta were given the option of being under the jurisdiction of one or the other.⁹⁰

⁸⁷J. B. Webster, The African Churches among the Yoruba, 1888-1922 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 3.

⁸⁸Webster, p. 4.

⁸⁹Venn to Lamb, March 23rd, 1864 (CA2/L3).

⁹⁰Venn to Hinderer, September 22nd, 1864, ibid.

With respect to the Yoruba Mission, it was specified that Crowther would provide such ministrations as desired by the missionaries.⁹¹ It was not intended to give Crowther control over the affairs of established white dominated missions such as Abeokuta.

EXPANSION OF CMS MISSIONS IN YORUBA: 1846-1860

As already mentioned, the CMS expanded from Badagry to Abeokuta in 1846 and then from Badagry to Lagos following the British intervention in Lagos. Abeokuta remained the center of the Yoruba Mission until 1861, when the secretaryship was transferred to Lagos. In 1853 David Hinderer and Adolphus Mann established a station at Ibadan and Ijaye respectively. Ijaye also became the American Baptists' first station in August 1853 with the settling of Thomas J. Bowen. From Ijaye, the Baptists moved to Ogbomoso in 1854 and then to Lagos. Abeokuta however, was not occupied until 1856. After Abeokuta, Oyo became the last station occupied by the Baptists before the outbreak of the Ijaye war. Meanwhile, the CMS had continued its expansion with European catechists going north to Iseyin and Oyo in 1853. From Lagos, Gollmer stationed agents at Ibgessa, Ikorodu, and Offin.⁹²

From 1853 to about 1860, several journeys of reconnaissance were undertaken by each of the leading figures in the Mission -- Townsend, Gollmer, and Hinderer. Townsend travelled north to Oyo, Awaye, Iseyin, Saki, and Ogbomoso; west to Ibara, Isaga, and Ilaro. At each of these places 'Saro' catechists were stationed, and by 1860 they were all out-stations, with Ogbomoso as a main center.⁹³ Hinderer and Irving reconnoitred

⁹¹Venn to Lamb, March 23rd, 1864, ibid.

⁹²Ajayi, Christian Missions, pp. 96 ff.

⁹³Ibid.; Townsend to Venn, January 7th, 1858 (CA2/M4).

the Ijebu country in 1854 but were not permitted to establish missions there.⁹⁴ Hinderer resumed his travel to Ijebu in 1859, and Gollmer also in that year travelled extensively to several Ketu towns. By 1860, work was already carried on in the capital, Ketu.⁹⁵

The second Niger Expedition that commenced with Dr. Baikie's successful ascent of the Niger river in the Pleiad in 1854⁹⁶ made the dreams of 1841 a reality overnight. The CMS became excited about the possibility of extending their chain of stations all the way to Nupe. Venn informed the Yoruba Mission that a meeting at Buxton's place was called to consider the new possibilities.⁹⁷ But it is indicative of the estrangement between the Society and the British authorities, that this time the CMS was not relying on the government, either for encouragement or support. The local committee of the Yoruba Mission was informed that any action on their part was to be independent of the commercial and political measures adopted by

⁹⁴Townsend to Venn, December 19th, 1854, (CA2/M3).

⁹⁵Townsend to Lay Secretary, September 5th, 1859, (CA2/M4). For detail of these voyages, see C. A. Gollmer, Life and Missionary Labour in West Africa (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1889), pp. 137-40; 145-8.

⁹⁶The year 1854 may be taken as a watershed in the history of Nigeria. The Niger Expedition, jointly sponsored by the British government, McGregor Laird (Laird was given a contract to build and equip a vessel for carrying mails), and supported by the CMS, succeeded in penetrating the Niger to Lokoja and a further 300 miles up the Benue. The administration of quinine enabled all Europeans on board to return alive. Once the Niger-Benue confluence was reached, merchants, consuls, and missionaries exercised pressures on the government to support the work of exploration and discovery. On January 1st, 1854, the British government agreed to give Laird subsidies for a period of five years, provided at least one vessel assented the Niger each year. The whole venture known as the "Niger Expedition of 1857-1864" led among other things to the foundation of the Niger Mission. John E. Flint, Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 19; Adu A. Boahen, Britain, the Sahara, and the Western Sudan 1788-1961 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 222 ff.

other parties.⁹⁸ The work of the Niger Mission began with the foundation of a mission at Onitsha and Igbebe (on the Niger-Benue confluence) by its future Bishop, the Rev. Samuel Crowther.⁹⁹

Thus, in spite of internal dissensions within the Mission, strained relations between London and the Yoruba missionaries, and a shortage of staff and resources, an impressive expansion took place. In 1860 conversion and preaching was carried on in four stations at Abeokuta, Ake, Igbein, Ikija, and Owu; in the main centers of Badagry, Lagos, Ijaye, Ogbomoso; and in numerous out-stations.¹⁰⁰ The Yoruba Mission was expanding to the east and north toward the Niger when the Ijaye war erupted.

⁹⁷Venn to Crowther, February 23rd, 1855 (CA2/L1).

⁹⁸Venn and Graham to the local committee of the Yoruba Mission, February 23rd, 1855, ibid.

⁹⁹Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 97.

¹⁰⁰Stock, II, p. 8; Gollmer, p. 135; See map at end.

8. THE ANNEXATION OF LAGOS

1. THE IJAYE WAR

The conflagration was ignited by a succession crisis. The defunct kingdom of Oyo placed its defence on two bulwarks -- Ibadan under Oluyole, the Bashorun, and Ijaye under Kurunmi, the Are-ona Kafanko (field marshal an Oyo title). When in 1859 Atiba the Alafin of Oyo died, his son the Crown Prince Adelu was chosen to succeed him instead of dying according to custom. The conservative Are of Ijaye refused to recognize the new king, and Ibadan was charged to bring the rebellious despot back to his rightful allegiance.¹ Dahomey was also involved on the side of Ibadan.² The first skirmishes found Ibadan encamped around Ijaye, a state friendly to the Egba, and the latter feeling directly threatened entered the war on the side of Ijaye. Soon practically the whole of Yorubaland was involved.³

The general effect of the war was to close the overland trade routes through the Ijebu towns, thereby seriously affecting the amount of goods exported at Lagos. Campbell died just after seeing these trade routes close and all subsequent consuls and governors attempted in vain to reopen them. Faced

¹Biobaku, p. 60.

²Consul O. Brand to Lord John Russell. The Ijaye war, April 9th, 1860. F. O. 84-115 cited in C. W. Newbury, British Policy towards West Africa: Selected Documents 1786-1874 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 354-55.

³The Ijebu peoples were divided into the Ijebu-Remo and Ijebu-Ode, each having its chief, but the Awujale of Ijebu-Ode was considered the paramount chief of all the Ijebu. Ellis, p. 10.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

The reign of King Henry the First, who reigned from the year 1100 to 1135, was a period of great importance in the history of England. It was a time when the country was united under a single monarch, and when the laws of the land were firmly established. The king was a man of great wisdom and courage, and he was able to bring about a great measure of peace and prosperity to his kingdom. His reign was marked by a number of important events, including the conquest of Wales and the establishment of the Norman dynasty. The king's death in 1135 was a great loss to the country, and it was a time of great sorrow and mourning.

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with a sharp decline in exports Brand,⁴ Campbell's successor, attempted to mediate fairly between Ibadan and the Egba. Advised by the Lagos merchants, he sent a deputation⁵ to the Egbas "to keep out of strife" and to the Ibadans to "give up their war-like intentions."⁶ Egba reluctance to co-operate was based on a clear appreciation of their interests. Ibadan had been their traditional enemy. Since 1830 they had encroached in an area (Egba Forest) formerly theirs and had also misappropriated Egba kola groves. Moreover, the Egba insisted that they kept the trade routes closed in order to block the flow of arms and ammunitions to the Ibadan via Ikorodu market.⁷ This in effect became their principal justification for the blockade.

DETERIORATION IN EGBA-BRITISH RELATIONS

Already in the years immediately preceding the annexation of Lagos, the relations between the Egba and various consuls had deteriorated. There existed irritating problems that neither Lagos nor Abeokuta were in a position to resolve. In 1858 the leaders of the Niger Expedition tried to solve the problem of portage by ipso facto emancipating those domestic slaves who had volunteered for service.⁸ Angry slave holding chiefs, particularly those of Igbore and Igbein, retaliated by robbing caravans that passed to and from Lagos. But what the chiefs re-

⁴Brand was appointed Consul for the Bight of Benin on November 25th, 1859.

⁵Newbury, Select Documents, pp. 354-55.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Shokenu (an Egba chief) to S. Crowther, February 1st, 1861 (CA2/M4).

⁸Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 169.

garded as rightful compensation for 'losses' was viewed by Europeans as wanton acts of pillage and destruction. The Foreign Office at the instigation of Lagos merchants warned the Egba that they would forfeit support against Dahomey unless restitution was offered. Unfortunately, the weak Egba government could do little to restrain the activities of these independent individuals. This source of irritation continued.

Acting-Consul Hand continued Brand's effort at mediation and peace. Pro-Egba, but regarding their involvement in the war with misgivings, he nevertheless thought that Dahomey was the main threat to peace. Hand planned armed intervention against Abomey to protect the Egba western flank but was unable to raise the required force of West Indian troops. He was succeeded by Foote on December 21st, 1860.

Foote attempted to associate both missionaries and traders with a policy of friendliness and firmness toward all people in the neighbourhood of Lagos. Remaining generally sympathetic to the Egba and supporting his predecessor's policy of building a discipline Egba force to subdue Dahomey, he concurred with missionary endeavour to make the Egba the instrument of British policy and the spearhead of civilizing activities in the area. But again like Hand, Foote (on May 17th 1861) died before he was able to raise a military force to aid the Egba. His death symbolized the end of a chapter in Egba-consular relations. Up to this time the Lagos authorities had agreed to a greater or lesser extent that the Egba were worthy of defence, and deserved special consideration as the center of progress and missionary activity in West Africa. Subsequently consuls, and later governors of Lagos, began to seriously question this

traditional policy, and gradually the Egba began to emerge in the mind of these as the chief obstacle to peace in the area.

THE ABANDONMENT OF THE PRO-EGBA POLICY BY THE BRITISH AT LAGOS

It was unfortunate that at a time when an impartial consul was urgently needed, Foote was replaced by McKoskry in May 1861. Influenced by the Delta analogy, McKoskry reasoned that the Egba were really motivated into the war by the sole desire to control the trade routes from the coast to the interior.⁹ It was of course true that the Egba as producers and middlemen in the cotton, palm oil, shea-butter and indigo trades were competing with the Ibadan for the Lagos market. They wanted the interior trade to pass through Abeokuta rather than through the Ijebu. Ibadan, on the other hand, wanted a direct route to Lagos through Ikorodu and the intermediaries of the Ijebu, independent of Abeokuta. McKoskry shifted the blame on the Egba and exonerated Ibadan simply because the commercial interests of the latter conveniently coincided with those of the Lagos merchants. The immediate reason for closing the trade routes, however, was not to monopolize the Lagos market but to make the war effort more effective. It was customary for the Egba to destroy all trade and property in order to drive people to war. As previously stated, the embargo placed on the River Ogun trade was aimed at the export of arms and ammunitions to Ibadan via Ijebu middlemen. In other words it was the military and

⁹In the Delta region, the city-states of Bonny and Brass monopolized the oil trade to the interior up until the Europeans made direct contact with the producers in the hinterland. McKoskry was influenced by Consul Burton's comparison of the Egba with the Delta states. See Biobaku, p. 72.

political threat of Ibadan, rather than commercial competition, that motivated the Egba into the war, though this is not to say that they were not in turn motivated by irredentism and ambition.

But McKoskry had been personally antipathetic to both the Egba and the CMS for over a decade.¹⁰ As a Lagos merchant, he had resented missionary interference in trade and had long coveted the Society's cotton store and wharf adjacent to his own premises.¹¹ Now as consul he was inclined to be impatient and abrupt with the Egba. His tactic was to pressure the Egba into opening the trade routes by threatening to use unilateral measures (blockade or even force). The Egba, adhering tenaciously to their policy of keeping army ranks filled by prohibiting trade, simply ignored the request.¹² Foiled, McKoskry began to abandon the cautious pro-Egba diplomacy pursued by consuls and missionaries for the past two decades.

McKoskry's initial policy change was to divert Captain Jones's mission from its original objective of providing the Egba military aid against Dahomey.¹³ Jones explained to the

¹⁰ Captain Jones (see below), reflecting the view of his superior McKoskry, confided to the Anglican missionaries at Ketu and Ijaye (King and Mann respectively) that the English had erroneous views on Abeokuta -- a deceit for which the missionaries were largely responsible. Gollmer to Dawes, July 3rd, 1861 (CA2/M4).

¹¹ In March, 1861 (shortly before his appointment as Acting-Consul) McKoskry once again asked to purchase the Society's cotton premises at Lagos. McKoskry to the Secretary of the CMS March 10th, 1861 (CA2/M4). The request was refused on the ground that the Society held the property as "trustee" and therefore was not justified in alienating it, Venn to McKoskry, May 23rd, 1861, ibid.

¹² Christians of Abeokuta to the Parent Committee, n.d., ibid., (received on Oct. 18, 1861). The writers explained that the Egba leaders were forced to interdict trade because men refused to fight and proceeded to Lagos to trade.

¹³ Foote had initiated the mission, ibid.

Alake that he received instructions to send back to Freetown the soldiers intended to teach his people military tactics.¹⁴ McKoskry thought that "neutrality" would reduce the tension all round making circumstances more favourable for a reconciliation. The Egba naturally regarded this move as an act of hostility and as another example of unkept British promises.¹⁵ The war dragged on, and Lagos-Abeokuta relations deteriorated even further.

THE OCCUPATION OF LAGOS

Meanwhile, the Foreign Office came around to the idea that the annexation of Lagos was necessary for its efficient administration and indispensable for the stability and peace of the area.¹⁶ Pressures for such a move had originated with Brand as early as April 1860. The gist of his argument was that the British objectives of extending "the blessings of industry, commerce, and Christian civilization" to the interior would never be achieved under present conditions. Lagos, a protectorate in everything but in name, needed a strong governing authority to keep together the discordant element of society and to ensure the conditions for commercial development.¹⁷

The Foreign Office was, however, faced with the task of convincing the Colonial Office.¹⁸ Russell explained to Newcastle that the permanent occupation of Lagos was indispensable

¹⁴Captain A. T. Jones to the Alake and Elders of Abeokuta, July 3rd, 1861 (CA2/M4).

¹⁵Christians of Abeokuta to the Parent Committee, n.d. ibid.

¹⁶Instructions for annexation were enclosed in the despatch from Lord John Russell to Foote, June 22nd, 1861, P.P., 1862, LXI (339), 5-6.

¹⁷Ibid., Consul Brand to Lord John Russell, April 9, 1860, 4-5.

¹⁸Hargreaves points out that while Palmerston and Russell lived, the Foreign Office was most active in supporting the use of British power in West Africa. The Colonial Office, on the other hand, was influenced by separatist thought and less inclined to

for the complete suppression of the slave trade, and that Lagos would fall in the hands of Kosoko if protection was withdrawn.¹⁹ Kosoko was used as a pretext. It was simply untrue that the slave trade had been revived in Lagos. At best there existed the possibility of revival if vigilance was weakened. The fictitious argument was an ingenious way of receiving the approval of Parliament and public opinion in general.²⁰ The threat of French competition in the markets west of Lagos did not fall on deaf ears. Palmerston suggested that it might be "useful" to establish a British protectorate at Lagos to forestall French ambition.²¹ This was at least more credible; earlier in January the Foreign Office received Foote's reports of a French warship visiting Lagos and naturally connected it with intrigues between the French firm of Victor Régis and Kosoko.²² The Colonial Office was reluctantly drawn into the scheme and finally approved Russell's orders for annexation.²³

support formal territorial extension. J. D. Hargreaves, Prelude to the Partition of Africa (London: Macmillan & Co., 1963), pp. 34-38.

¹⁹ Lord John Russell to the Duke of Newcastle: annexation of Lagos, February 7, 1861. C.O. 96/58. Russell pressed the matter again on March 21 and June 10: C.O. 96/58. Newbury, Select Documents p. 426.

²⁰ I am indebted for this point to Ajayi, Ibadan, 69, 103.

²¹ Lord Palmerston: Minute, annexation of Lagos, March 3, 1861, F. O. 84/114; Newbury, Select Documents, p. 426.

²² Consul Foote to Russell, January 9th, 1861. F. O. 84/1141; ibid., p. 428. In March 27, 1857 the French government signed a contract with Régis to recruit West African "immigrants" for Martinique and Guadeloupe. Since Africans were not anxious to immigrate, the French Free Emigration Scheme could only operate as disguised slave trade. The British naturally associated this scheme with the revival of the slave trade and encouragement to Kosoko. Biobaku, pp. 60-61.

²³ June 22nd, 1861: C. O. 96/58; Newbury, Select Documents, p. 428.

Consul Foote was recommended to see that no "injustice" should befall on Dosunmu. A careful explanation of the "motives" that induced the British government to occupy Lagos was to be accompanied with an adequate pension. Foote was explicitly ordered to avoid aggressive policies towards the surrounding chiefs.²⁴ But McKoskry on whom the task of capturing Lagos fell did not share the restraint of the Foreign Office; consequently, he had no qualms in resorting to browbeating methods to obtain the Treaty of Cession from Dosunmu and his chiefs. The actual signing of the treaty on August 6, 1861 took place under the threat of naval bombardment.²⁵

The sovereignty, profits, revenues, rights, and territories of the port and island of Lagos were given to the "Queen of Great Britain, her heirs and successors forever." Dosunmu was left with a facade of power.²⁶ Various appeals and petitions from Dosunmu, Chiefs of Lagos, native Lagosians, complaining of their treatment at the hands of the British authorities fell upon deaf ears.²⁷ McKoskry admitted that the whole affair took place under duress but claimed, somewhat unconvincingly, that it was forced upon him by the conduct of the people.²⁸

The prevailing effect of the occupation of Lagos

²⁴P.P., 1862, LXI, Lord John Russell to Consul Foote, June 22, 1861 (339), 5-6.

²⁵After a number of unsuccessful attempts to induce Dosunmu to sign the treaty, McKoskry finally called the Prometheus in Lagos water. Consult Biobaku, pp. 68-69; Ajayi, Ibadan, 69 (August, 1961), 104.

²⁶P.P., 1862 LXI (339), See Inclosure 1 in No. 6, 8-9.

²⁷Chief of Lagos to Queen Victoria, August 8th, 1861; King Dosunmu to Queen Victoria, ibid.; Petition from certain Natives of the Island of Lagos, ibid., inclosed in Venn to Russell, September 20th, 1861. P.P. 1862, LXI (339), 9-14. Petition from certain Natives of the Island of Lagos, September 10th, 1861, inclosed in Chiefs of Lagos to Victoria (communicated to Lord Russell by Venn) October 28th, 1861, ibid., 15-19. King Dosunmu to Queen Victoria, January 10, 1862, ibid., 19-21.

²⁸Acting-Consul McKoskry to Lord John Russell, August

was to convince neighbouring chiefs that similar encroachment in their own territories would occur in the near future. Missionaries were looked upon with suspicion and fear, particularly in the out-stations, as they had been in effect largely instrumental, albeit unwittingly, in bringing about foreign traders and government.²⁹ Much of the understanding and goodwill patiently built by the missionaries over the years was being demolished rapidly by the widespread belief that the white man's intervention at Lagos was responsible for the continuation of the conflict. At Abeokuta the war was tantamount to a revolution: it created the opportunity for the more militant anti-European educated elite to rise on the wave of discontent to positions of power.³⁰

7th, 1861, ibid., 7-8. McKoskry was appointed Acting-Governor in August, 1861.

²⁹In November 1863 the Yoruba Mission reported encountering difficulties in establishing out-stations at Okeadan and Addo. It attributed this to a belief among surrounding chiefs that Christian teachers were to be forerunners of government officials. Reference to this report of November 9th is made in The Secretaries to Lamb, December 23rd, 1863 (CA2/M5).

³⁰See below.

PART IV: CONCLUSION

9. THE SEQUEL TO THE BRITISH ANNEXATION OF LAGOS

The British in Lagos inevitably came to a military clash with the Egba. The two principal threats to the commercial and financial stability of Lagos were the development of "free" (i.e. duty free) markets in neighbouring areas, and the continuation of the war.¹ The authorities at Lagos had sufficient power and resources to resolve the first problem by establishing custom collection houses, then annexing or establishing protectorates over ports -- like Badagry to the west, Palma and Leckie to the east -- in a position to draw the Ogun trade away from Lagos. To bring the war to an end, in order to free the flow of trade overland to Lagos, however, proved a most difficult task.

The defeat of Ijaye in March 1862 brought the war further south around the Lagoon markets near the Lagos boundary. The Egba proceeded to besiege Makun, an important station near Ikorodu and between Ikorodu and Ibadan, to stop the flow of arms to Ibadan the enemy. But in their position they were also disrupting the flow of palm-oil and foodstuffs from Ibadan to Lagos.² Alarmed, the Lagos government attempted to persuade, cajole, and press the Egba in abandoning Makun. Unfortunately,

¹Sixty per cent of the Colony's revenue was derived from import duties. Newbury, p. 66.

²Biobaku, p. 71.

the British absence of deference for local customs, together with the fear, suspicion, and misunderstanding which had continued unabated since 1860, only helped to convince the Egba that the British in Lagos were the real threat.

Townsend made several attempt to mediate between the two parties, but as he came to be rivalled and challenged by the 'Saro' party who began to increasingly dominate Egba politics from about the year 1864, his influence with the Egba leaders waned. These educated Africans professing a form or proto-Nigerian nationalism³ were naturally hostile to Townsend. He was someone who had openly denigrated the black men, and had, moreover, competed with them for the ears of the chiefs. The 'Saro' with their maxim of "Africa for the Africans"⁴ were at once suspicious of Townsend's advice and determined to resist the encroachment of Lagos.

The climax of the Lagos-Egba dispute came with an armed expedition to drive the Egba from the Ikorodu area on March 29th, 1865. The Egba were defeated and retired to Abeokuta with heavy casualties. The routes to the interior were freed, but as in countless times before, they were closed and re-opened again, and so on.⁵ In brief, the diverging commercial interests of the various groups were not thereby resolved by the armed defeat of the Egba. One of Glover's⁶ earliest measure was to

³See a paper presented by Jean H. Kopytoff to the African Studies Association (American) meeting of October 1963. "Two types of Early Nigerian Nationalism: Sierra Leonians in Lagos and Abeokuta," African Studies Bulletin, VI, 4, Dec. 1963, p.44.

⁴P.P., 1865, XXXVII (553), Freeman to Newcastle, April 9th, 1864. p. 10.

⁵Biobaku, p. 76; P.P., XXXVII (553), Glover to Cardwell, April 5th, 1865, pp. 32-34.

⁶Commander J. H. Glover, Lieutenant Governor and Acting-Consul.

forbid Europeans the right to reside at Abeokuta. He wanted Abeokuta merchants to come to Lagos to purchase merchandise. It was precisely this objective of making Lagos the sole mart for European goods that the Egba were trying to frustrate.⁷

The difficulties with Lagos gave the Sierra Leonians an even firmer grip on the political affairs of Abeokuta, and these were now likely to resort to extreme demands. In 1865 G. W. Johnson became their leader. He devoted himself to the task of erecting a "civilized form of government"⁸ that could resist Lagos power. The result was the emergence of the Egba United Board of Management which advocated the adoption of written laws, customs collections, and the teaching of English in schools.⁹

It was the question of customs collection involving inevitably the question of boundaries that led to a renewal of the clash with Lagos. In June 1867, the E.U.B.M. announced its intention of placing customs houses on the Ogun at Isheri and Agbamaya. The Lagos government immediately suggested a boundary delimitation between Lagos and Egba territory but was flatly rejected. The E.U.B.M. instead complained of the doings of constables patrolling the Egba border. Although Glover, the Administrator, punished the culprits and gave instructions against molesting Egba travellers, E.U.B.M. reaction was negative and hostile. Glover denounced Johnson.

⁷See Glover's terms to the Egba after the clash at Ikorodu, Biobaku, App. E, p. 105; Townsend to Venn, July 28th and October 3rd, 1865, (CA2/85).

⁸Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 196.

⁹The constitution of the E.U.B.M. is still a controversial question. Ajayi (pp. 197-198) thinks that the E.U.B.M. was to be a government of traditional rulers with a powerful civil service of educated Africans. The emigrants were not to supersede traditional rulers, but were to formulate policy in their capacity as "chief advisers and writers of letters." (Townsend to Venn, October 3rd, 1865, (CA2/085). Because they spoke the language and

The boundaries of the Lagos Protectorate had never been defined. When Glover suggested that the territory north of Otta should be regarded as neutral ground, the Egba regarded this as an encroachment on Egba territory. The dispute exploded when Glover placed constables in disputed territory, between Ebute-Metta and Otta, in anticipation of an Egba 'attack'. It is not clear whether the Egba interpreted this as the commencement of an invasion, nevertheless, the combination of fear and excitement culminated in a spontaneous 'outbreak' (the Ifole)¹⁰ against European merchants and missionaries on October 13th, 1867.

The riot led to the looting and destruction of churches, missionary houses, and merchant stores. Converts were left alone, but every missionary house was broken into except at Ikija where Ogudipe (an Ologun of Ikija) took upon himself to protect missionary lives and property.¹¹ The Egba authorities promised to restore order and pay compensations, but in the meantime European missionaries, native teachers, and converts had begun to pour in Lagos.¹²

This incident took the missionaries by surprise. As can be imagined their reaction was intensely personal. Venn spoke of the "ingratitude"¹³ shown to missionaries, and Townsend had never believed all the time he was stationed at Abeokuta¹⁴ that the Egba would turn against their protectors. In a sense he

were familiar with European diplomacy, they thought their role was essential in the struggle against Lagos. The Board was not intended to be a council representing the traditional, sectional, and immigrant elements in Abeokuta. (cf. Biobaku, p. 79).

¹⁰Literally it means Housebreaking.

¹¹Venn to Lamb, December 23rd, 1867 (CA2/L4).

¹²Biobaku, p. 83.

¹³The Secretaries of the CMS to J.B. Wood and V. Faulkner, December 23rd, 1867 (CA2/L4).

¹⁴Townsend left Lagos on March 2nd, 1867. Townsend to Venn, March 2nd, 1867 (CA2/085).

was correct. Since persecution was directed against Europeans, not Christian converts, it could be said that the object of Egba hostility were missionaries as symbols of European power, identified with Lagos, not as symbols of Christianity. Significantly, Venn and Townsend did not quite realize that this incident symbolized the termination of an epoch -- the end of missionary influence in the political affairs of Abeokuta. Nor was this obvious in 1867. The Ifole was not a plan to get rid of missionaries; only a year later when Lagos refused to yield to Egba demands did the E.U.B.M. ban the residence of all Europeans in Abeokuta and its territory.¹⁵

The expulsion of European missionaries in 1867 symbolized the end of missionary influence in the political affairs of Abeokuta. For a decade or so after 1867, European missionaries were relegated to the coast and the work of the interior (Yoruba and the Niger) was directed by Africans under the leadership of Bishop Crowther. It was not until 1879 that an European took over the superintendence of missionary activities at Abeokuta and Ibadan.

10. MISSIONARY ACHIEVEMENTS

The British acquisition of Lagos in 1861 set the foundation for British rule in Nigeria. The missionaries were largely instrumental in bringing the British to Lagos, but the annexation was not part of their long-term plan. Venn condemned the annexation of Lagos,¹⁶ for his ideal was a British colony, not one usurping all functions like Lagos, but one providing tutelage and protection until Africans were ready to take over.¹⁷ It was part of Venn's policy to educate Africans in preparation for self-government in

¹⁵Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 202.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 174.

¹⁷Venn, Memoirs, p. 135, see also p. 35.

Church and State. The new class were to rise in social position and influence, and if they were not to supersede the political power of the traditional chiefs, they were certainly to lead the reformation of Egba society.

All the missionaries had to do was to introduce the "Bible and Plough". Just as legitimate trade would naturally extirpate the slave trade, Christianity with its inherent 'superiority' would supersede 'primitive' religion. Missionaries would only pioneer a cotton industry and introduce European agriculture techniques; then the commercial affairs of Abeokuta were to be handed to the new class of traders and producers trained in mission schools. There was the need for British power in the form of consuls and the British navy to provide protection, while missionaries and the educated few co-operated to establish the new Society. Similarly, missionaries would take the first step in establishing self-extending Christian congregations; thereafter the task of conversion was to be undertaken by native Christians themselves. The aim was a Church that was inter-denominational and truly African in character, one, moreover, that was directed and supported by the people.

On reflection it appears that by and large the objectives laid out by Salisbury Square were not attained in our period. As the policy-makers in London did not intimate a time-limit for the achievements of the above mentioned goals, it can perhaps be said that it was hardly a fair trial period. A longer time in Abeokuta and more favourable circumstances would have probably produced different results. Certainly various local factors and unforeseen difficulties, as have been shown, played their part in frustrating missionary goals. Apart from everything else, however, this investigation demonstrates that missionary policy foundered because it was based on the erroneous assumptions of well meaning Victorians who had little understanding of Africa's needs and problems.

Lagos was added to Britain's 'informal' empire at a time when the interests of CMS missionaries, British merchants, Consul Beecroft, and the Egba displayed a remarkable harmony. What went wrong after 1853? The answer is simple. The British entered the stage at Badagry, Abeokuta, and Lagos at a time when the whole of Yorubaland was in the midst of great political, economic, and social upheavals. Traditional ideas and institutions were weakened, confidence was shaken, several groups were experimenting with new forms of government and military organization.¹⁸ Internecine wars continued, and law and order was not properly restored till the end of the 19th century. The British did not, nor were they in a position to, resolve the problem of re-establishing some kind of political balance between the various "states", and to reconcile the various conflicting commercial interests. They tried to alleviate economic and political rivalries but at the same time they took side. Anglican missionaries supported the political and economic interests of Abeokuta, the British traders and consuls those of Lagos. The British became so involved in the commercial, judicial, and political affairs of Lagos that annexation was in a sense forced upon them. But what of the missionaries at Abeokuta?

By 1861 the missionaries at Abeokuta were regretfully admitting that regeneration had not followed on the wake of Christianity and commerce. Only a small minority were christianized.

¹⁸ Ajayi, Christian Missions, p. 19.

Even though the impact was more pervasive than a small number of Christians would suggest, nevertheless, the majority continued with their traditional beliefs and practices. Among those who accepted the Christian faith, bona fide, there probably occurred a much greater adaptation to traditional Yoruba culture than the missionaries had recognized. The crucial point, however, is that Christianity made almost no in-roads among the traditional chiefs.

With reference to the cotton venture, all that can be said is that it was not a total failure. Exports dropped sharply in the 1860's. This was due to the high labour costs brought about by the shortage of labour during the Ijaye war. Beside the question of costs and the related one of industrialization, already referred to above, there was the problem of the suitability of cotton culture at Abeokuta. Soil and climate ensured the survival of cotton but not its prosperity. For that reason, cotton survived till 1900 but it did not become a major export crop.¹⁹

More generally, the trust system and domestic slavery were not abolished. The trust system was at the root of the Egba-Lagos conflict. Most of the Lagos trade, particularly palm-oil, was monopolized by the 'Saro' middlemen who had capital in the form of trade goods advanced by European merchants. These middlemen with a monopoly of the merchandise, and trading on the basis of barter, were in a position to exploit the Egba with

¹⁹ Webster, JHSN, II, 4, 422.

inferior goods. For this reason the Egba preferred 'direct' trading with cowries, and the Lagos 'Saro' in turn resisted this practice because it undermined their monopoly. The crucial problem of labour was left unresolved. Peace and order were essential for the development of commerce which depended on an abundant supply of the only source of labour then known, domestic slavery, which in turn depended on the disruption of law and order -- war -- for its replenishment. This vicious circle was not broken until the introduction of railways which greatly reduced the demand for domestic slaves and the absorption of Yoruba into the Lagos Protectorate which ended the Yoruba wars. Thus, the social improvements, and the social and political revolution, Venn spoke about had barely begun by 1861 and is still going on in Nigeria to-day.

The greatest achievement was in the field of education. The missionaries at Abeokuta and elsewhere, wherever schools were established, set the foundation for the educational system of Nigeria which moulded the first and subsequent generations of the Nigerian educated elite. In the long run, Venn's idea of training Africans to participate in the running of their own country, though delayed by the missionaries on the spot, and later by British rule in Nigeria, was eventually implemented in the 1830's, when educated elements began to participate in government.

In the short run, the most dramatic consequence of CMS policy was the collision between European missionaries and the educated minority produced in mission schools. These new leaders, whether in business or in the Church, were to rise in social position and influence to lead the reformation of Egba society.

But it was specified, to stress once again, that they were only to rival the traditional rulers, not to supersede them. There was no room for political ambition in the missionary scheme of things. Educated 'Saro' were to enter government service, commerce, or the Church but were not to become involved in 'pagan' politics. How missionaries were expected to restrain natural ambition was never made clear? The missionaries at Abeokuta thought they could stem ambition -- ambition in any direction -- by discouraging and even opposing intellectual interests. But the experience in Abeokuta demonstrates how fallacious it is to believe that man's intellectual curiosity and appetite for learning can be curbed.

The mission educated 'Saro' turned around and rejected, whether on the question of a native pastorate or on the policy with Lagos, the leadership, pace, and method of Townsend and his supporters.

The 'Saro' had their own ideas and policies for Yorubaland which ironically enough were in tune with Venn's blueprint. Venn had advocated the promotion of Africans in the Church and the civil service, in preparation for ecclesiastical and political self-government. In a broad sense the E.U.B.M. and the Society's native agents had only tried to realize these goals. It was natural for educated Africans and missionaries to compete, particularly when they were constantly reminded by Townsend how unfit they were to run their own affairs. But this rivalry was the most unpleasant and unexpected result of missionary policy. It largely explains why the very people who did so much to champion the Egba point of view and who were mainly responsible for retaining Abeokuta as an independent enclave -- Egbaland was

not absorbed into the Lagos Protectorate until 1914 -- were eventually discredited and finally expelled.

On the progress of the African Church, the crucial point is that under Venn's leadership sustained efforts were made to promote Africans in positions of leadership in the Church, even though this was queried and opposed by Townsend and like-minded colleagues. Advances were made following the expulsion from Abeokuta, when the work of the Niger and Yoruba Missions for over a decade was undertaken by native pastors, under the leadership of Bishop Crowther. This was consistent with the belief that native pastors were capable of playing a prominent role in building the Christian Church of Africa. Venn's death in January 1872 ended this era; during the late 80's and early 90's, a sudden change came when the whole idea of having native pastors was challenged and resisted, as much by Europeans and Africans in Africa, as by the CMS leadership in England. Europeans replaced Africans, and when Bishop Crowther died in September 1891, he was also replaced by a European. The outcome was for some Anglicans, Baptists, and Methodists -- these had experienced a parallel development -- to secede to form the African Churches.¹⁹

¹⁹Max Warren, review of The African Churches among the Yoruba, 1888 - 1922, by J. B. Webster, JAH, VI, 2, 236.

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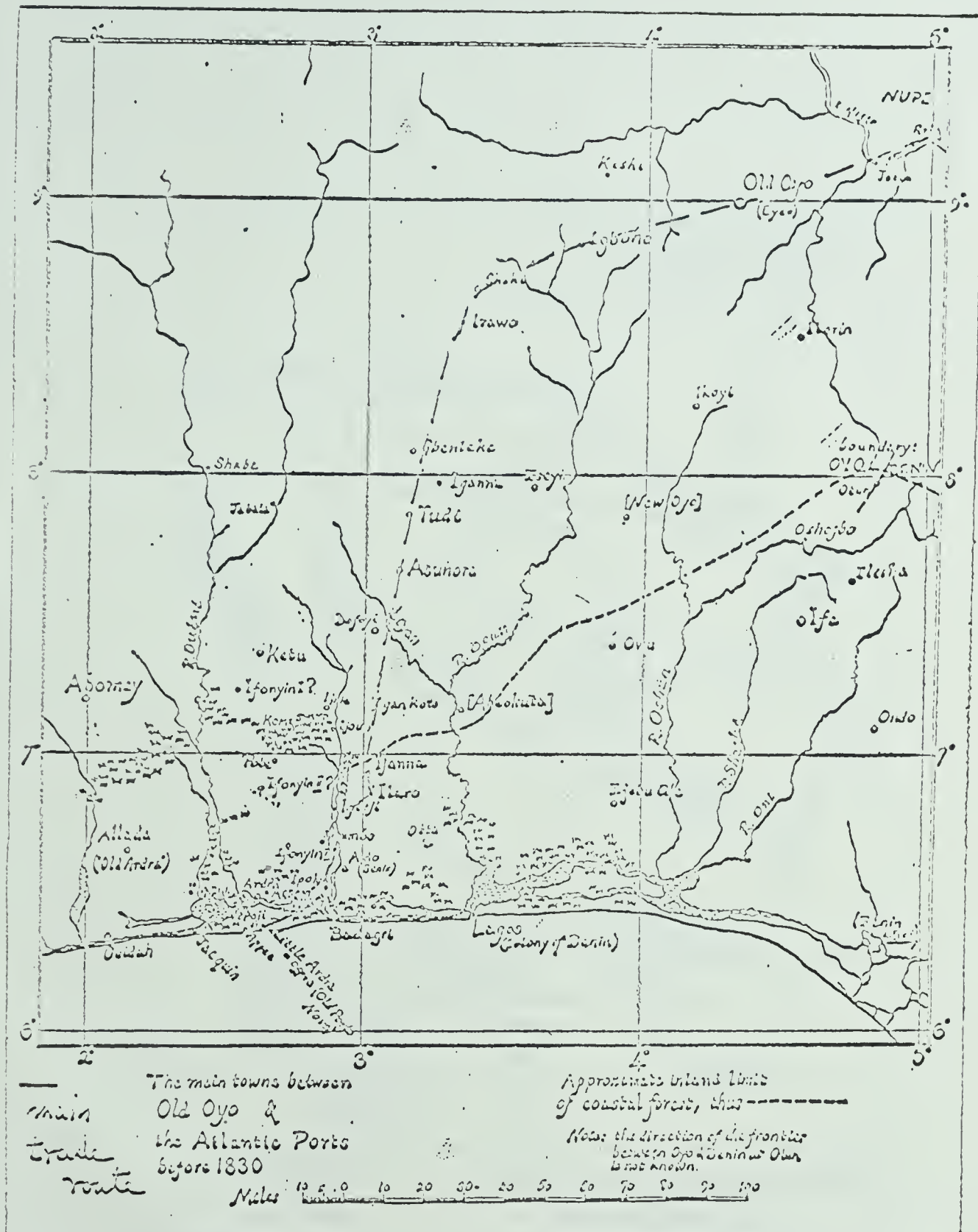
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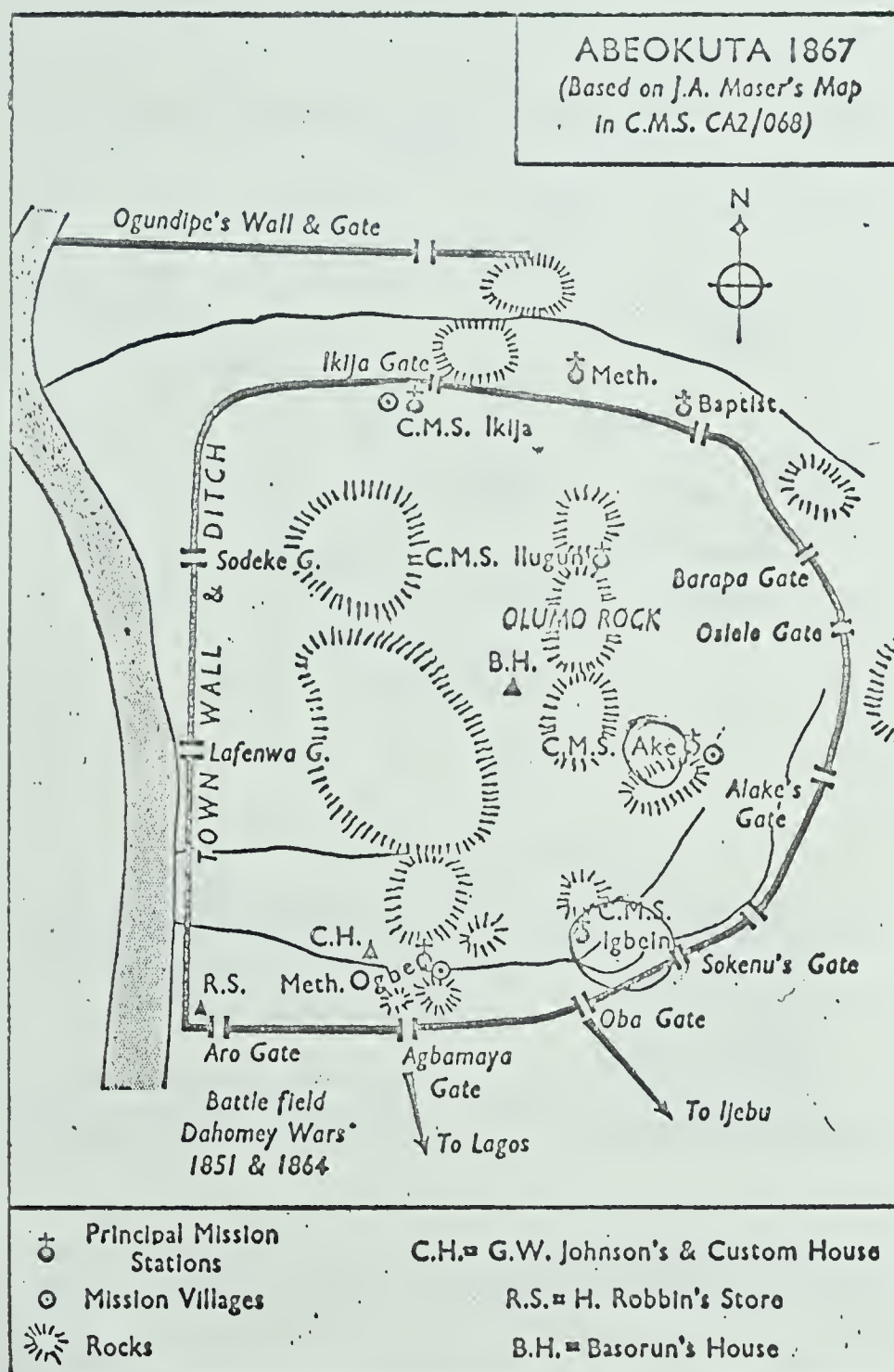
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FIGURE 2



Taken from J. F. A. Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841 - 1891 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1965), p. 166

FIGURE 3



Taken from J. F. A. Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841 - 1891 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1965), p. 125.

FIGURE 4

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